Public Participation in Parliament– Perspectives on Social Media Technology (SMT)

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Public participation is encouraged in democracies to heighten decision-making, transparency, accountability and good governance. Globally, the trend to increase and enhance public participation is growing rapidly. So much so that almost all democracies have now embraced it as an agenda for good governance. The introduction of new media led parliaments to experiment with these tools to make the public aware and for them to understand the role of parliament in the governance of the country and to enhance citizen participation in the law-making process through consultations, public hearings, committee work and elections.

The Parliament of South Africa is mandated by the Constitution (1996) to facilitate public participation in all their processes. To execute their mandate, Parliament introduced a few strategies to facilitate public participation in their processes. Previous research indicates that public participation is still ineffective in Parliament. Thus, in an effort to enhance it, Parliament developed a model that is aimed at standardising all public participation activities in the institution. This study attempts to asses if the use of Social Media Technologies (SMTs) in parliament processes can enhance public participation. The focus of the study is on the theories of public participation and on the developing theories of SMTs for good governance. To collect data, two research techniques were applied during this study; namely, document analysis and structured interviews with experts in Parliament in both the fields of public participation and SMTs.

This study found that Parliament has established a good foothold in the SMT landscape. However, there are challenges that hinder the institution in fully leveraging on this foothold to enhance public participation. It concludes that public participation is still ineffective in Parliament; however, this can change once Parliament overcomes challenges in the use of SMTs and takes advantage of already established SMTs to enhance public participation. These SMTs can enhance public participation if implemented properly. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations are presented.

OPSOMMING

Openbare deelname word in demokratiese state aangemoedig ter wille van beter besluitneming, deursigtigheid, verantwoordbaarheid en goeie landsbestuur. Wêreldwyd is daar ‘n neiging om openbare deelname te verhoog en uit te brei, in so ‘n mate dat bykans alle demokratiese state dié metode reeds aanvaar as ‘n resep vir goeie landsbestuur. Met die ontstaan van nuwe media die Parlemente hierdie middele begin gebruik as instrumente om openbare bewustheid van en begrip vir die Parlement se rol in landsbestuur te bevorder, en om burgers se deelname aan wetgewing uit te brei. Dit is gedoen deur burgers te betrek by oorlegpleigng, verhore, komiteewerk en meningsopnames.

Die Parlement van Suid-Afrika het ingevolge die Grondwet (1996) die mandaat om openbare deelname te fasiliteer en om die publiek by al sy werksaamhede te betrek. Ten einde hierdie mandaat uit te voer, het die Parlement verskeie strategieë ontwikkel om openbare deelname in sy werksaamhede te bevorder. Bestaande navorsing dui daarop dat dié metodes tot dusver nie effektief was nie. Om dié situasie aan te spreek, het die Parlement ‘n model ontwikkel om alle vorme van openbare deelname aan die instelling se bedrywighede te standardiseer. Hierdie studie probeer vasstel of die gebruik van SMTe (Sosiale Media-Tegnologieë) die publiek se deelname aan werksaamhede van die Parlement kan verhoog. In hierdie studie val die klem op teorieë oor openbare deelname, asook op die ontwikkeling van teorieë oor SMTe vir goeie landsbestuur. Twee navorsingstegnieke is toegepas om data vir hierdie ondersoek te versamel: die ontleding van dokumente, asook gestruktureerde onderhoude met deskundiges op die gebied van openbare deelname en SMTe in die Parlement.

Die studie het bevind dat die Parlement ‘n goeie grondslag gele het op die gebied van SMTs; daar is egter wel uitdagings wat die Parlement verhinder om hierdie goeie grondslag ten beste te benut. Die studie kom daarom tot die gevolgtrekking dat openbare deelname in die werksaamhede van die Parlement nog steeds ondoeltreffend is. Dit kan egter verander indien die Parlament die uitdagings t.o.v. die gebruik van SMTs oorkom en die reeds gevestigde SMTs benut om openbare

deelname te versterk. Kortliks gestel, SMTs kan ‘n bydrae lewer om openbare deelname te verhoog indien dit behoorlik benut word. Op die grondslag van hierdie bevindinge word daar ‘n paar aanbevelings gemaak.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP	Annual Performance Plan
DA	Democratic Alliance
DoE	Department of Education
ECT Act	Electronic Communications and Transaction Act
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
GPAD	Governance and Public Administration Division
HoC	House of Commons
IAP2	International Association of Participation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
RIPAP	Report of Independent Panel of Assessment of Parliament
IPU	International Parliamentary Union
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MPs	Member of Parliament
MPL	Members of Provincial Legislature
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NRC	National Research Council
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act
PCOs	Parliamentary Constituency Office
PDOs	Parliamentary Democratic Office

PEO	Public Education Office
POPI	Protection of Personal Information Act
PPF	Public Participation Framework
PPM	Public Participation Model
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RSS	Rich Site Summary
SANEF	South African Editors' Forum
SMTs	Social Media Technologies
SOM	Sector Oversight Model
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
FUK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEPR	WORLD e-Parliament Report
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter serves as a guideline for the study. The chapter will outline the structure of the study, as well as identify and explain the research problem, reasons for undertaking the study, and the methodology that will be applied to find answers to the research problem. This chapter will also give a brief outline of the following chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Parliament's vision is that of "an activist and responsive people's Parliament that improves the quality of life of South Africans and ensures enduring equality in our society" (Strategic Plan, 2009-2014:10). This stems from Parliament's constitutional mandate to facilitate public participation to allow people to participate in the law-making process. Parliament's role and outcomes are to represent the people and ensure government by the people under the Constitution (1996), as well as to represent the provinces and local government in the national sphere of government (Strategic Plan, 2009-2014:10).

Public participation has been a strategic priority of Parliament since the demise of apartheid in 1994. This became apparent with the introduction of open parliament during the first and second terms of democratic parliament, whereby committee meetings and House plenaries were opened to the public for the first time. Public participation was further strengthened during the third term when Parliament adopted a language policy that introduced the use of all eleven official languages in parliamentary proceedings. During this term, several outreach and sectoral programmes were introduced in an effort to extend the public participation process (Strategic Plan, 2009-2014:12).

The fourth democratic parliament was marked by the development of the Public Participation Framework (PPF) for the legislative sector, which aimed at guiding the

public participation process within the sector. The goal of the PPF was to provide a universal approach and set of minimum standards for public participation in the sector (Scott, 2009:02). The PPF is intended to guide Parliament and legislatures to develop their public participation models (PPM) in order to adopt a unified approach to the way public participation is conducted. Parliament has a draft PPM that will be launched in the fifth term of democratic parliament (Strategic Plan, 2009-2014:12).

In addition to the PPF, Members of Parliament (MPs) are provided with ICT tools to ensure that they interact with the public anywhere, anytime using the internet and SMTs. The “tools of the trade” for MPs include a smartphone, tablet and a laptop of their choice. There is free Wi-Fi in the parliamentary precincts and this will be rolled out to MP’s homes in the near future. MPs are provided with training on how to use these tools, including the use of SMTs, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, as platforms for immediate and easy interaction with the public (ICT Strategy, 2014-2019:05). In his 2015 Parliament Budget Vote 2 speech, Honourable House Chairperson Frolick confirmed this by stating that, the provision of MPs with ICT tools through the self-management model, which caters for individual needs, shortens the technology life cycle from five to two years (Frolick, 2015). Internationally parliaments are generally conservative in adopting new technologies; however, there has been an increase in uptake in the use of smartphones and the SMTs (IPU, 2012:71-72).

Public participation is encouraged in democracies to enhance decision-making, transparency, accountability and good governance. According to the World e-Parliament Report (WEPR) (IPU, 2012:21), the current global trend is to increase and enhance public participation. Since the introduction of newer generations mobile networks, SMTs and multimedia platforms, parliaments have been increasingly experimenting with these technologies for mainly two purposes. Firstly, to educate the public about the role of parliament in the country’s governance and, secondly, as a platform to increase public participation in legislation through consultations, hearings, committee work and elections (IPU, 2012:21).

Following agreements by parliaments at the World e-Parliament and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) conferences, Parliament created a Facebook and Twitter account in 2012, followed by a YouTube channel in 2013 and Instagram account in 2016. As of 23 March 2017. The Parliamentary Facebook account has 14 738 likes

and 14 738 people visited the account. Twitter has 351 000 followers and has so far posted 12 271 Tweets. YouTube has 16,335 subscribers and 3,559,626, views with the debate on the impeachment of President Zuma on the 5th April 2016 attracting more viewers and gaining 226 509 views. The Instagram account, which was created in February 2016, has 484 posts, 1 258 followers and follows 103 other accounts (Parliament of RSA Website, 23 March 2017).

The 2014 elections changed the political landscape in South Africa, affecting political representation in Parliament. Newcomers, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), came with a different energy making Parliament vibrant and increasingly popular on different media platforms. During the 2015 State of the Nation Address, the EFF disregarded the Speaker's orders and disrupted the House, which resulted in their being assaulted by the police and removed from the chamber. During this incident Parliament's feed to the broadcasters was censored, however the journalists inside the chamber and some MPs recorded the incident and immediately uploaded it on YouTube. This video trended for weeks and attracted more than 300 000 views (Parliament of RSA Website, 2016).

During the same sitting, the cell phone signal was jammed, barring journalists from filing live stories during the address. It only took one journalist to Tweet about the incident for almost the whole nation to join in on the "bringbackthesignal" hash tag (#), prompting Parliament to restore the signal before proceeding with the president's address (see Appendix 1). Both incidents show the immediacy and the power of SMTs to mobilise and expose regardless of one's status or position. WEPR (IPU, 2012:22) agrees when it states that "the immediacy of social media as a vehicle to inform the public as things occur" is part of the equation and can provide citizens with a sense of greater participation in public life. In addition, when instant information is first channelled via social networks, particularly by MPs, traditional media are able to keep abreast of the developing news and activities through these platforms" (IPU, 2012:22).

Parliament trended for days on SMTs and this outcry led Parliament to ensure that there will be no signal jamming in future sittings, while the EFF and Democratic Alliance (DA) won their court cases against Parliament to use police to remove MPs in the chamber. The South African Editors' Forum (SANEF) also won their case against the Speaker of the National Assembly (NA) to provide uncensored feed to

broadcasters. All of this was possible because of the support from the citizens through SMTs. According to IPU (2012:23), “these new means of communication have not caused the end result, be it a demonstration or the downfall of a leader, but they have facilitated the actions of citizens with speed, flexibility, and effectiveness that have rarely, if ever, been witnessed prior to this” (IPU, 2012:23).

Bertot, et. al (2010:83) argue that, SMTs “hold great promise in their ability to transform governance by increasing a government’s transparency and its interaction with citizens. The interactive and instant capabilities and the increasingly pervasive nature of social media technologies can create new ways of democratic participation, pressures for new institutional structures, and processes and frameworks for open and transparent government on an unprecedented scale”.

Despite Parliament introducing new digital media in order to engage with citizens, information is still not reaching the majority of the population. This could be attributed to the current public participation strategies not being effective, particularly when it comes to the youth, who, according to the Census 2011, are in the majority in South Africa (Statistics SA, 2011). The Report of the Independent Panel of Assessment of Parliament (RIPAP) of 2009 noted that youth and women are marginalised by the current public participation strategies of Parliament (RIPAP, 2009:54). Today’s youth is tech savvy; therefore, they need to be engaged in a language they understand. WEPR (IPU, 2010:110) emphasises that “Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is central to the new generation as it is part of their way of life; therefore, parliaments should take advantage of reaching and engaging this generation through these developments”. These include platforms such as internet and cell phones, which are used as vehicles for SMTs.

Parliament is mandated by the Constitution (1996) to foster public participation: that is, the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, responsibility and cooperation, which is an essential part of human growth. As such, Parliament needs to take advantage of the already established SMT footprint to engage with the public. The WEPR (2010:110) notes that the rapid growth of ICT has changed the environment within which parliaments operate. The explosive growth of SMTs has created unprecedented opportunities for citizens to communicate with parliaments, to share concerns amongst themselves, and to come together to engage in direct political

action (IPU, 2012:22). Williamson (2013:15) agrees that these tools serve as channels to increase interaction, member's accessibility to the public and increase participation in the work of parliament as well as for campaigning and political engagements.

This study can be classified under the broad theme of public participation. Through participation, citizens are allowed enough time and flexibility to come up with new ideas and proposals and a plan to integrate them in the policy-making processes of government (WERP, 2012:22). By reviewing the current state of public participation and the use of SMTs in Parliament, the study will look at the weaknesses and opportunities identified in terms of the above and provide recommendations on how Parliament can leverage on the use of SMTs to enhance public participation.

1.3 REASONS FOR SELECTING THIS TOPIC

Theoretically, despite the growth of SMTs as one of the major global communication platforms, its use in Parliament, in particular to engage citizens on Parliamentary processes and law-making, has not been extensively explored. There is a lack of material focusing on SMTs as a platform to enhance public participation in parliaments. The use of SMTs for public participation is also still new in the global parliamentary community, given the conservative nature of parliaments in its processes. In many countries the various SMTs play a key role in facilitating the interactive relationship between citizens and political representatives, as they allow citizens to engage with their political leaders at local and national levels. These communication platforms also offer innovative opportunities for political actors, political institutions and the public to communicate, collaborate and openly share information, thereby empowering citizens to make political contributions (Bertot, et al., 2010:83).

SMTs in the South African Parliament are used somewhat haphazardly because of a lack of strategy and policy to guide this process. There is also no system to monitor and evaluate the use of SMTs and a lack of capacity to support them. The aim of conducting this study is to engage relevant literature on the use of SMTs in parliaments as a platform to interact with the public, and to observe those tasked to implement public participation and SMTs in our Parliament through applicable data-collection

methods. There is a general acceptance in Parliament that the current strategies for public participation are not as effective as they should be. This consequently affects the quality of interaction between Parliament and citizens (PPF 2013:84).

There have been similar studies completed on public participation in the legislative sector; however, the focus has broadly been on *the effectiveness of public participation in the legislative sector* (Scott, 2009). One study was completed on *the effectiveness of SMTs to enhance public participation in the Namibian government (*Maritz, 2014). Furthermore, a study exists entitled *e-Parliament to e-Democracy: Creating a Model for Effective Management of Public Content in Parliament* (Tyumre, 2012). Waterhouse (2015) also completed a study on *People's Parliament? An assessment of public participation in South Africa's legislatures*. The current study will focus on SMTs as a platform to be leveraged to enhance public participation in the South African Parliament. It will hopefully contribute to the current knowledge that has been produced around this theme. The study could help Parliament to compose a comprehensive strategy on the use SMTs as one of the critical platforms to engage citizens and especially the youth as they are in the majority and show increasing interest in the politics of the country.

The aim is not to replace the existing strategies, as South Africa is a dynamic country. An appropriate mix of context-specific public participation strategies is needed in order to reach a wider population. This study aims to fill a gap, leading to more effective representation and communication between Parliament and the citizenry via SMTs as an appropriate context-specific participation strategy. This study will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge on this subject.

1.3.1 Overall purpose of the study

Public participation is one of the strategic objectives of Parliament. However, without proper guidance and strategy it might be difficult for the institution to measure the extent of the effectiveness of these strategies. As mentioned above, Parliament has a PPM, but parallel to this Parliament should also develop a SMT strategy if they are to take advantage of this communication platform to engage citizens.

The main reason for conducting this study is to assist Parliament to tap into the rapidly growing medium as a platform for public participation, which can assist Parliament to

engage a wider audience, especially the youth, which is the majority in the country. This will be done by reviewing the current literature in respect of the problems highlighted in the current public participation strategies with the view to evaluate whether the use of SMTs as a space for participation could increase public participation in Parliament.

The main purpose of this study is therefore to explore the identified research questions and to recommend resolutions to the problem statement. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this study will assist Parliament to develop a practical strategy for the inclusion and implementation of SMTs as one of an appropriate mix of platforms to enhance public participation. It is also hoped that it will offer input to the limited body of knowledge on the topic of SMTs as a tool for public participation in parliaments.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:16) note that, “scientific investigation can only begin once the statement of the problem has been defined”. According to ISS (2011:01), public participation in South Africa is increasingly regarded as an interchange between government and the people. However, a modern constitutional democracy promotes participatory governance between the electorate and their representatives in Parliament, provincial legislatures and local councils. Parliament should assert its position as a platform recognised by the Constitution (1996) to facilitate public participation, as current efforts appear to be stagnating.

Parliament has different strategies in place to facilitate public participation, such as public hearings, sectoral parliaments, and Taking Parliament to the People however they are not effective. Scott (2009:22) argues that, even if these campaigns are taking place across the country at regular intervals, effectiveness and efficiency are not necessarily the main aims of these events. RIPAP (2009:54-56) adds that the main factors that impede the effectiveness of these strategies include the socio-economic conditions of a huge percentage of South Africans, and how they are implemented. Disadvantaged communities are often marginalised from decision-making processes due to various factors, such as limited access to resources, lack of transport, time

constraints, illiteracy and inadequate access to the media. Time is very crucial to youth, women and the employed (RIPAP, 2009:54-56).

The institution's inability to apportion enough time for public to prepare for oral and written submissions exacerbates this situation as they are often provided with less than three weeks, thus, affecting their capacity to make significant inputs in any legislative process (ISS, 2011:03). The limited time allocated for public participation by the Protection of Information Bill (2010) is a recent example of this. Most of the time civil society organisations and ordinary members of society turn to the Constitutional Court for remedy out of frustration, where laws are passed without thorough public participation (ISS, 2011:03). Since Duffey and Foley (2011:199) as an "attractive" means for people to make their views heard without making unreasonable demands on their time specifically note online "consultations", Parliament should explore this option to strengthen public participation only if it is authentic.

SMTs have proven to be a very flexible, immediate, powerful and popular mode of communication whereby people can be reached anywhere, anytime. These do not require much of people's time or for them to travel to Parliament to make submissions. Tenhunen and Karvelyte (2014:01) believe that communication via SMTs creates a close relationship between politicians and potential electorates which affords the politicians an opportunity to reach and communicate faster and directly with the citizens without the use of traditional media. This communication is taking place online and offline. Messages posted to personal networks are multiplied when shared, which allows new audiences to be reached (Tenhunen and Karvelyte, 2014:01). Even though it is seen as an opportunity for parliaments to enhance public participation, SMTs present challenges for parliaments and these will be discussed in Chapter 2.

As indicated in the previous section, Parliament has SMT accounts and can trend on any given day, especially when there are debates of public interest in the Chamber. The question that this study seeks to answer is: How ready is Parliament of South Africa to use SMTs as a strategy to leverage on the current footprint it has in the digital platforms to enhance the low level of public participation?

In order to answer the above question the following objectives, which corresponds to the research questions to guide the study, are outlined in table one.

Table 1.1: Objectives of the Study

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS
To analyse and describe public participation in the context of Parliament of South Africa.	What is the criterion for successful public participation? How does Parliament engage the public in its processes of law- and decision-making?
To examine and analyse the current strategies for public participation and their challenges.	To what extent does the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental contexts allow for public participation in Parliament?
To conduct a literature and relative investigation on the use and the effectiveness of SMTs in public participation.	How is the use of SMTs to enhance public participation in Parliament in comparison to other parliaments internationally and regionally?
To assess opportunities and challenges associated with the use of SMTs in Parliament in an effort to enhance public participation.	What are the challenges faced by Parliament in using SMTs to interact with the public?
To examine the readiness of Parliament to use SMTs as a platform for public participation, legislation and policies that relate to SMTs.	What is the extent of readiness by Parliament (both MPs and staff) to use SMTs to enhance public participation strategies currently employed?
To recommend the different methods to strengthen public participation through the use of SMTs to support decision-making.	In what ways can the current SMTs be used to enhance public participation?

1.5 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research Design

According to Mouton (2011:54), a research design is “a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research”. It is a plan regarding what information to gather, from whom, how and when, and how that information is to be analysed to achieve the research objectives. In this case, a qualitative research design has been utilised that concentrates on Parliament as a case study. This study can be classified as an empirical, textual, hybrid data and medium-controlled study (Mouton, 2001:146). This

design is relevant for the study because the research will mainly focus on the current data on public participation and SMTs, and information from in-depth interviews with the experts in the field of public participation and SMTs within the institution.

1.5.2 Research Methodology

The methods to be used for this study consist of the use of secondary data from documents and data from previous research, as well as information from interviews. The researcher used non-probability purposive sampling to select the sample for the study because of the convenience of this method. This was relevant because specific people were targeted as interviewees, including senior managers tasked with the implementation of public participation and SMTs in Parliament. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect information from identified respondents. Analysis of the content from relevant documents was also employed. These include existing public participation strategies, policies and guidelines, as well strategies, policies and guidelines for SMTs.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

Neumann (1997:40) asserts that, “everyday culture is filled with concepts, but many of them are vague and full of definitions”. It is imperative that the researcher clarifies the concepts used in the study to dispel the misunderstanding and loss of meaning that might be caused by different interpretation of key concepts by different people. The key concepts for this study are thus clarified below.

1.6.1 Democracy

De Villiers (2001:23) believes that, “democracy is an ongoing and regular interaction between citizens and their popularity elected institutions including public participation strategies and responsibility of institutions which are mandated by the Constitution to facilitate public participation in their processes”. Bekker (1996:90) concurs that “it is more than electing a representative to power once every few years, as it enables citizens to participate in decision making at all levels”. The United Nations regards democracy as a universal value that is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems, and is also

based on their full participation in all aspects of their lives (UN Resolution 62/7, November 2007).

1.6.2 Public Participation

Public participation is a strategy used to influence, direct, empower, control and own a programme or policy. In South Africa public participation is enshrined in the Constitution (1996). Davids (2005:25) states that public participation requires people to have the capacity to participate effectively. Theron (2008:08) defines public participation as a "dismantling of the top-down, prescriptive and often-arrogant knowledge transference and communication styles that tend to be imposed on communities by outsiders". The Public Participation Framework (PPF) (2013:07) defines public participation as "the process by which Parliament and Provincial Legislatures consult with the people and interested or affected individuals, organisations and government entities before making a decision".

1.6.3 Social Media Technologies (SMTs)

According to Duffey and Foley (2011:201), "Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content on the website". Chatora (2012:02) elaborates that, "Internet-based tools and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute, and search for information online. This interactive or collaborative nature of these tools makes them social." Bertot et al (2010:374) argues that in practice, SMTs serves as a universal phrase for a collection of web-based technologies and services. These includes blogs, microblogs i.e., Twitter, Jaiku and Tumblr, social or multimedia sharing such as, YouTube, Flickr, Stumble Upon, SlideShare and Last.fm, text messaging, discussion forums, collaborative editing tools such as wikis, virtual worlds like Second Life, and social networking services such as Facebook, MySpace , Google+, LinkedIn, Orkut and QQ"

1.6.4 Parliament

The IPU Handbook On Parliament and Democracy (2006:6-7) defines Parliament as "the central institution of democracy that embodies the will of the people in government, and that carries their expectations that democracy will be truly responsive

to their needs and will help solve the most pressing problems that confront them in their daily lives". The Handbook sets out the following key characteristics of a democratic parliament: it is representative, it is transparent, and it is accessible.

1.6.5 Accountability

According to Ben-Zeev (2012:40) accountability refers to "the duty that people in power have to explain and justify their actions and decisions". Accountability is central to good governance. For example, one of Parliament's role is to hold the executive to account by ensuring that the Ministers appear before Parliament to account to the people who put them in power.

1.6.6 Transparency

Vishwanath and Kaufmann (1999) and Kaufmann (2002) in Bauhr and Grimes (2012:05) define transparency as the "increased flow of timely and reliable economic, social and political information, which is accessible to all relevant stakeholders". This perspective emphasises not only the availability of information, but also its reliability and accessibility to a range of potential agents. Bauhr and Grimes (2012:05) define transparency as "the availability of, and feasibility for actors both internal and external to state operations to access and disseminate information relevant to evaluating institutions, both in terms of rules, operations as well as outcomes".

1.6.7 Governance

Kooimans (1993:02) describes governing as "the activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies and governance as the pattern that results from these governing activities". According to Mercy Corps (2010) in Theron and Mchunu (2014:42), "governance is the process of decision-making and how those decisions are implemented. Governance is 'good' when the systems and processes are participatory, accountable, transparent, just and responsive". The Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD) (2011:08) argues, the quality and the manner in which decision are made and implemented determines the effectiveness of governance. If public participation is not authentic the decision made are likely to affect governance.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, which gives an overview and background of the study; it serves as a guideline for the execution of the study. This chapter introduces the study to the reader. It discusses the statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the research, and research questions and/or hypothesis.

Chapter 2 covers the theoretical framework from both local and international sources. This chapter examines selected empirical research, reports practice and identifies innovations relevant to public participation in general. It also looks at public participation in the context of the Parliament of South Africa.

Chapter 3 looks at the definition, evolution and the use of SMTs. The literature mainly focuses on SMT platforms in parliaments. A comparative analysis with other countries/parliaments will be discussed in this chapter. It also looks at the concept of SMTs and its relation to public participation within parliaments.

Chapter 4 focuses on Public Participation and SMTs in the context of South African Parliament. The Proposed Public Participation Model and the analysis of the public participation strategies currently employed in parliament as well as the effective use of SMTs currently used in the South African Parliament and their effectiveness.

Chapter 5 provides the research methodology; it explains the research tools employed in the study to draw the necessary research outcome. These include issues such as research design, sampling, data-collection method, data analysis and definition of key concepts.

Chapter 6 focuses on the policy and/or regulatory framework of public participation and that of SMTs in South Africa.

Chapter 7 looks at the use of SMTs for public participation in the case of South African Parliament. This chapter consists of the findings and analysis of the results.

Chapter 8 concludes the study, summarises and relays recommendations. It provides a conclusion, which is linked to the problem statement, purpose and links to the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to De Vos (1998:64), a literature study "contributes towards a clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the identified problem. Therefore, a literature study or theoretical framework is vital for guiding research". It ensures coherence and establishes the boundaries of the research project (Bak, 2004:17).

This chapter reviews the literature on public participation in general and zooms in within parliaments and on the possibility of using SMTs to enhance public participation in parliamentary processes, which will serve as a basis for conducting this study. The chapter will start with the theoretical framework to give context to the key concepts. It will then give an account of public participation and SMTs in relation to Parliament. The chapter will start by addressing democracy as it is intrinsically linked to public participation.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Democracy

Sisk, et al., in Nyalunga (2006:01), reiterates that "participation is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy", in other words public participation and democracy are frequently informally linked. Consequently, for better understanding of public participation it is important to first define democracy, as it is the basis for public participation. The onset of most democracies is based on "government by the people", which effectively means that people participate in decisions affecting their lives. Heywood (2007:72) suggests that in order to understand democracy we should take into consideration Lincoln's address when he talked about "government of the people, by the people and for the people"(Lincoln 1832 in Heywood, 2007:72). Democracy is therefore based on the government for the people by the people (Adegboye, 2013:242). This, according to Heywood (2007:73), implies that "in effect people govern themselves by participating in critical decisions that affect their lives and determine the outcome of society".

Democracy is derived from two ancient Greek words, *kratos* and *demos*, which mean power or rule, and people, respectively, thereby implying rule by the people (Heywood, 2007:73). The term democracy is one of the most widely used ideology in politics; conversely, irrespective of its popularity there is no commonly accepted definition, as different scholars have diverse opinions and views of democracy (UK Essays, 2013:01). Roux (2006:10) likens democracy to "meat and poison", in that it has a way of meaning different things to different people. Many authors agree with him that democracy has different meanings to many people, which might result in it meaning nothing. For example, both China and Britain regard themselves as democratic governments but their systems of government are hugely different. From this perspective, democracy is believed to assume different forms in different societies (UK Essays, 2013:01).

Democracy, as described by Roux (2006:10), is "a noun permanently in search of a qualifying adjective". It is qualified by four adjectives in the South African Constitution, namely representative, participatory, constitutional and multiparty (Republic of South Africa,1996). The central idea of democracy, as put by Roux (2006:01), is that members who are affected the decision should be made by those members, or at least by elected representatives who derive power from their members to make those decisions. Williams (2011, in Adegboye, 2013:242) concurs with this notion by defining democracy as a form of government in which all people have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. Adegboye (2013:02) further indicates that democracy, as a system of government has become an important parameter to measure good governance, development and acceptability.

Dahl (2005:188) maintains that the key feature of democracy is the continuing responsiveness of government to the preferences of individuals, considered as political equals. He outlines eight criteria that must be present in a democracy, namely the right to vote, right to be elected, right of leaders to compete for support and vote in free and fair elections, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and institutions capable of making government measures depend on votes and other expressions of popular will. Thus, according to Offor (2006:268) in Booysen (2009:03), democracy is "a system of government in which every individual participates in the process of government maximally or minimally".

Democracy is widely used as a preferred system of governance around the world. Sen (1999) in NRC (2008:02) describes it in three ways. Firstly, it has intrinsic significance, that is, freedom to participate in social and political discussion and to take part in political action to achieve human wellbeing. Secondly, democracy can make pertinent contributions to political action to serve the general needs of the public, specifically those of needy but neglected groups. This implies the instrumental importance of assuring governments' responsibility and accountability. Lastly, democracy can play a constructive role in the creation of social values and norms. This can be done by ensuring value formation and understanding the needs, rights and duties of citizens.

Democracy can take different forms, such as participatory, direct and representative, or parliamentary democracy (Heywood, 2007:73). According to NRC (2008:02), in direct democracy citizens can exercise their decisions directly, while in a representative democracy, elected representatives act in the interest of the people. Roux (2006:10) further elaborates that in a direct democracy people rule themselves while in a representative democracy the communication of the people's will is facilitated by their elected representatives (Roux, 2006; NRC, 2008). These forms are discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Forms of Democracy

2.2.2.1 Direct Democracy

Budge (1996:35-37) explains direct democracy as a regime that allows all adult citizens to debate and vote on significant political questions and their collective vote decides on the action to be taken or policy to be adopted. He further describes direct democracy as "unmediated rule" by the people, and as mediated party democracy, whereby political parties mediate between community and government (Budge, 1996:50-51). Heywood (2007:74) supports this view by stating that direct unmediated rule means citizens are continuously engaged in government's work without interruptions. De Villiers (2001:19) adds that this form of participation is based on the notion that there is "consultation" with every citizen; it is self-government and therefore eliminates the difference between governors and the governed or people.

Plato famously attacked this Athenian model of democracy. He mordantly dismissed this as the signs of a political system in which everyone is free to do as they please while leaders entertain the fads of the people at the expense of the public interest. Rousseau disagrees by arguing that, because of the central role of education in collective decision-making by the citizen, any political system that does not give citizens a direct role in such decision-making is not truly democratic (Roux, 2006:08). While Rousseau argues that direct democracy has the capacity to produce alternative and better decisions than those made under representative democracy, Brennan (1997:32-34) believes that no individual has responsibility for an outcome, nor does one person bring about that outcome under direct democracy decision-making. Budge (1996:107-108) argues that opponents of direct democracy evade the fact that democracy requires participation, and they also unduly emphasise the impracticality of arriving at decisions through popular debate and assume that such debate is unstructured and uninformed by experts, parties or procedures.

2.2.2.2 Representative Democracy

Representative democracy is typically justified as a concession to the impossibility of achieving direct democracy in the modern nation state. According to De Villiers (2001:20), representative democracy is “government by men and women elected in free and fair elections and representatives are elected in office and are charged with the responsibility of making decisions on behalf of the electorates”. In other words, the representatives carry the mandates of their voters and represent their views. This kind of democracy makes the politicians publicly accountable to their constituents only if the elections are competitive and the public is empowered to remove the underperforming representatives (Heywood, 2007:74).

According to Heywood (2007:74), representative democracy is a limited and indirect form of representation. It is limited because popular participation in government is infrequent and brief, and it is restricted on the act by voting every few years. Calland (1999:200) elaborates by basing this, is based on the assumption that the views of the people are represented by the elected representatives. According to Buccus (2007:03), a representative democracy is the only truly legitimate means of representing the interests of the marginalised and unorganised. With an emphasis on the quality of citizens’ debate about problems, it is perceived as a “mechanism that

enriches participatory democracy while enhancing civic engagement" (Buccus, 2007:04).

According to Roux (2006:09), the core of the modern view of representative democracy is summarised in Mill (1991)'s definition which describes "the notion of democracy as a political system in which the people voluntarily exchange their power to govern themselves for the power to control those whom they elect to govern them". Rousseau's commitment to the ideal of citizen participation led him to dismiss representative democracy as "a sham, a mere illusion, in which citizens are under the illusion that they exercise control over their elected representatives, but in reality they hand over control of collective decision-making to people who do not necessarily have the public interest at heart" (Roux, 2006:09).

Mill (1991) argues that a representative democracy is the preferred form of government when he rejects Rousseau's idea that when people release their control over to the elected representatives they "give away" their independence. In his response to Rousseau's objection he asserts that democracy can be learned, starting at the local level and then escalate to national level. He adds that people could still retain their control over their elected representatives through other institutions available in representative democracy, such as competition between political parties, the separation of powers and freedom of the press (Roux, 2006:09-10).

Modern democratic theorists present alternative models of democracy not to compete with representative democracy as the dominant form of contemporary democracy but to emphasise the various aspects of democracy either as a normative correction on the representative model, or as an attempt to more accurately describe its actual mode of operation (Roux, 2006:10). Five models of democracy are discussed below.

2.2.3 Models of Democracy

2.2.3.1 Introduction

Held (1987:06) identifies nine models of democracy, four being classical and five being contemporary models. For the purpose of this study only contemporary models will be briefly looked at, except for the participatory and electronic models, which will be

discussed in detail. These models will be discussed in relation to their association with the use of ICT in politics as outlined by Van Dijk (1996:05).

The contemporary models include the following:

1. Legalist democracy, which regards the Constitution (1996) and the law as the basis of democracy and is procedural in nature.
2. Competitive democracy, which is based on the procedural view of representative democracy and is characterised by the elections of representatives whereby political parties must compete for the support of voting citizens.
3. Plebiscitary democracy, which believes that the channels of communication between the citizens and the political leaders are used to intensify the voice of the citizenry and not necessarily that of the authorities, politicians and administrators.
4. Pluralist democracy, which focuses on the role of the intermediary organisations and associations of civil society as compared to the previous models that focus on the representatives and the citizens. This view simply means that the political system should consist of many centers of power and administration.

(Roux, 2006:10; Van Dijk, 1996:05; Held, 1987:06).

The use of ICT can be used to strengthen the present, primarily representative political system to challenge its difficulties and to rescue or revive the supremacy of institutional politics. ICTs can also be used to transfer politics on to civil society by means of participation, pluralism and direct citizen power. ICTs are treated as a technology of freedom, offering ways of decision-making that can replace traditional ways of political decision-making (Van Dijk, 1996:06).

2.2.3.2 Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy shares many similar characteristics with the pluralist model. The major difference is the change in attention from organisations to citizens. This model is a combination of representative and direct democracy. The central aim of this model is the support of citizenship. Rousseau is the first classical advocate of this model. His view of the people's will aim at the development of citizenship by means of

collective discussion and education. The primary purpose of this model on educating citizens as active members of the community, which clearly originates in the Enlightenment. An essential condition of this model of democracy is the presence of informed citizens. Rousseau's notion is supported by present-day proponents of participatory democracy, such as Pateman (1970) and Macpherson (1977), who support stimulation of active citizenship (Van Dijk, 1996:11-12).

Held (1987:06), one of the contemporary democratic theorists, classifies participatory democracy and direct democracy as part of the same model. He observes an evident relationship between these two forms of democracy as both emphasise the value of citizen participation in collective decision-making (Roux, 2006:10; Van Dijk 1996:12). Participatory democracy in its contemporary form is an attempt to bring back elements of direct democracy into modern systems of representative democracy. In this sense, participatory democracy is about whether, and how, citizens should be given the right to participate in decisions affecting them, while recognising the fact that the basic form of political organisation in the modern nation-state is likely to remain representative democracy. NRC (2008:02) supports this by stating that participatory democracy provides opportunities to overcome the shortcomings of representative democracy by combining it with elements of direct democracy.

According to a more sympathetic critic, Macpherson, in Roux (2006:10), believes "the best route to a more participatory form of democracy is to retain the present representative system and to rely on political parties to encourage citizen participation in their internal structures". This implies that participatory democracy is much more than original consent or periodic elections. It denotes extensive and active engagement of citizens in the governing process, and emphasises the role of citizens as active agents in self-legislation and authentic stakeholder in governance. It also refers to a set of structural and procedural requirements to realise community participation (commonly known as public participation), which is one of the objectives of the legislation, with participatory governance being the mechanism to achieve this. This is in stark contrast to representative democracy, in which the citizen becomes a "passive client" of government, a "watchdog" to whom the government remains accountable but otherwise ignores, and a periodic elector responsible for selecting those who actually govern. The contrast between the notions of representivity and participation is central to the conceptualisation of participatory democracy. The two

forms should not be similarly limited as they can complement each other to achieve the desired results. Most governments prefer the strategies to ensure accountability through both the traditional parliamentary routes and through participatory means, as in the South African democracy (Kjaer, 2004:13).

In this context, participatory democracy has emerged as a catchphrase for more authentic, popular or progressive forms of democratisation. Aragonès and Sánchez-Pagés (2009) in NRC (2008:02) define it as “a process of collective decision-making where citizens have the power to decide on policy proposals and politicians assume the role of policy implementation”. In this system, citizens lead by making a policy proposal, which the elected representatives may subsequently decide to implement” (NRC, 2008:02). Heywood (2007:73) elaborates that in participatory democracy there is supposed to be direct and continuous participation in decision-making, through referendums, mass meetings and even interactive television. De Villiers (2001:19) agrees, arguing that the idea is that the government “consults” every citizen directly in its decisions. Adegboye (2013:244) believes that participatory democracy endeavors to “generate opportunities for all members of a political party to make meaningful contributions in decision making, and strive for a wide range of people to have access to such opportunities”.

According to Calland (1999:62, in Scott, 2009:24), participatory democracy is based on the assumption of the existence of a functional state and empowered civil society. Empowered participatory processes specifically require a relative parity of power between citizens and representatives (McCoy & Scully, 2002:118). Scholars endorsing the idea of “empowered participatory government” argue that elections and the work of representative government have been unable to engage citizens in the content and process of democratic politics. . This result in inequality, which only benefit those with resources, public having no say in what happens in government institutions and public losing confidence in the legal and political system (Dzur, 2008:310).

The Participatory democracy model needs ICT instruments that are able to inform and activate the citizenry. With rapidly changing technology, it is important that relevant computerised information campaigns and mass public information systems are designed and supported with the aim of narrowing the gap between the “information rich” and the “information poor”. The new media should be easily accessible and user

friendly. The preferred electronic instruments for this model include public computer networks, teleconferences and electronic town halls. These are attractive as they could be a means for opinion formation, learning and active participation. The success of these instruments depends on the condition that not only the social and intellectual elite will participate in them and that their design is suitable for discussion (Van Dijk, 1996:12).

According to Van Dijk (1996:12), both conditions are not fulfilled currently. Firstly, because the so-called, “virtual communities” created on the internet and other public networks are extremely overpopulated by male, affluent people with high education and, secondly, the quality of the discussions in these networks is somewhat low, as some communication capacities of these new media do not support fruitful discussion (Van Dijk, 1996:12).

2.2.3.3 Electronic Democracy

Technology is improving rapidly around the world, which strengthened electronic democracy as an important tool to improve local democratic practice. The use of electronic democracy to facilitate public participation and improve governance processes in local government has been increasing. E-democracy refers broadly to the application of computer and communications technology to formal political processes. processes. These include deliberation and decision-making; to regulated processes, such as election campaigns; to informal political processes; and to political participation by community groups, associations and collectives (Victorian Government, 2004:01).

Kersten (2003:127) regards e-democracy as participative democracy and maintains that the design of electronic participating systems should take account of the needs of potential users. E-democracy is associated with, and has the capacity to facilitate, direct democracy, but has also created challenges to the conventional notion of representation (Kersten, 2003:127). It is important for the public to understand, trust and have confidence in the technology that it is secure and reliable, and there must be a level of privacy if e-democracy is to create an improved democratic environment (Alexander, 2003:210).

Even though access to and use of technology has increased, the entry cost has been reduced, and the internet capability has improved, the digital divide remains a challenge, especially in poorer communities (Hargittai, 2004:137). Nevertheless, technology has become an effective tool for integrating pressing demands on electorates' time and favored activities (Alexander, 2003:209).

2.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is a new "buzzword" in modern democracies. It is a widely used term and has been criticised for being politically ambiguous and vague in terms of definition (Jaroszynski, 2009:05). Scholars define public participation differently as there is no single universal definition (Booysen, 2009:03). This is supported by Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:50) when they argue that "public participation is an elusive concept that acts as an umbrella term for a new style of development planning" often referred to as intervention, facilitation or enablement in the community development debate. Public participation has been used to refer to a set of methodological tools used in development programmes, as well as to be evoked as a political philosophy. It has also been used to refer to various social or political interactions in different contexts and scales (Jaroszynski, 2009:05). Scholars believe that public participation is not a concept that can be explained in one sentence. This, according to Theron and Mchunu (2014:10), is positive because meanings should not serve as "blueprints" but should be dealt with as part of a social learning process. Radcliff and Wingenbach (2000), Green (2004) and Mafunisa (2004), in Booysen (2009:02), concur that "participation in democracy is more a process in social learning and engagement than a means to an end, as it encourages a reflection of views, deliberation and the consideration of other viewpoints, and generally supports a platform for the development of political and social strategies".

Stiegel and Wolfe (1994), in Theron and Mchunu (2014:08) caution that as public participation has become one of the trendy "catchwords" for some governments, it is supported by many but understood by few. Theron and Mchunu (2014:08) agree that it has become obvious, both internationally and locally, that public participation as both a concept and strategy has many faces, good (well-intended) and bad (poorly executed). However, at its core it signifies how ordinary people exercise their political

agency and voice in taking part in the decision-making processes that affect their lives (Jaroszynski, 2009:05). Rahman (1993:150) believes that “defining public participation should relate to the experience and exposure of that part of the process” or facilitation, that is the practical reality and context of the principle and strategy associated with it. Hence, a definition should not be cast in stone (Theron & Mchunu, 2014:09-10).

Most citizens regard public participation as a means to promote and encourage a “culture” of good governance (Nyalunga, 2006:01). Ackerman (2004:448) supports this notion by arguing, “The opening up of the core activities of the state to societal participation is one of the most effective ways to improve accountability and governance”. Essentially, participation is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy as it is crucial for good governance because it improves information flow, accountability, due process, and gives voice to those most directly affected by public policy (Booysen, 2009:03). According to Ballard (2007:17), this assertion that participation and democracy are intricately linked suggests that participation only contributes to democracy when it encourages debate, dialogue and deliberation, and even accommodates dissent. Nyalunga (2006:02) argues that public participation in short is “an important ingredient for good governance and quality service delivery”.

According to the DPLG (2007:15), public participation denotes an “open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making”. The importance of public participation is specified clearly in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) as “people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making”. Davids, et al. (2005:19) expand on this notion by stating that “public participation as defined in development should revolve around people, their diverse needs, changing circumstances, customs, values and knowledge”. The authors further reiterate that it is an inclusive process aimed at deepening democracy through formal participatory strategies. Creighton (2005:07) concurs as he defines public participation as “a process by which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making”. Public participation is viewed as a two-way communication and interaction with the overall goal of better decisions that are backed by the public”.

2.3.1 Public Participation Spaces

There are different spaces identified to describe public participation in decision-making processes, namely (1) invited spaces; popular invented, (2) created or claimed spaces; and (3) closed spaces. Invited spaces are spaces and channels formed to grow the legitimacy and participatory nature of the state. These include legal spaces created to “inform”, “consult” or “involve” communities in specific projects. The focus of these spaces is to generate opportunities for the poor, empower them and invite them to participate (Jaroszynski, 2009:18-20; Waterhouse, 2015:30). Popular invented, created or claimed spaces are owned by common persons and are created because of shared interest or concerns and manifest in the form of organisation and mobilisation. They are living spaces created and owned by less powerful actors against the power holders. Closed spaces are spaces where there is no access to decision-making processes. In these spaces, decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries of inclusion (Jaroszynski, 2009:18-20; Waterhouse, 2015:30).

Invited spaces are criticised for likely co-opting participants, limiting choice, ensuring the status quo and strengthening relations of domination. They are limited in what they can achieve because of their transitory nature as they may lack a sustained commitment to long-term active engagement with the state. Furthermore, they often do not provide people with the knowledge, skills and resources to participate effectively with the state. Jaroszynski (2009:18-20) believes that “invited spaces exist in a dynamic relationship to each other, and with claimed and closed spaces, where what happens in one affects the other. For instance, claimed spaces often prepare, empower, support and legitimise those who are then delegated to enter the invited space on their behalf. In addition, closed spaces may attempt to restore legitimacy by creating invited spaces, which opens up more possibilities for claimed spaces. The potential of invited spaces must be assessed in relation to the other spaces”.

2.3.2 Typologies and Modes of Public Participation

Different people utilise and apply public participation differently by different people depending on the perspective in which it is applied (Theron, 2008:106; Kumar 2002:24; Chambers, 2005:104). This, according to Theron (2009:117), compelled

researchers like Arnstein (1969), Oakley and Marsden (1984) and Pretty, et al. (1995) to develop levels, modes and typologies of public participation as guidance for conceptualisation and practice of public participation. As Chambers (2005:105) puts it, these guidelines are not rigid; they can be modified to suit the existing situations, contexts and needs. The aim of the seven typologies of Pretty, et al. (1995) is to demonstrate various conceptions relating to public participation. The typologies are outlined as follows:

1. **Passive participation**. In this stage, people are not given an opportunity to contribute before the decision is made. The authority makes the decision unilaterally; the public is only "informed" when a decision is already made about what is to be decided. This top-down approach often leaves the community clueless, frustrated and powerless. This differs with the core value of IAP2 (2000), which stipulates that "the public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives".

2. **Participation in information giving**. Here, participation takes place through responding to questionnaires or telephone interviews or similar public participation strategies. The public is not given an opportunity to influence proceedings, as there is no feedback and evaluation of the findings.

3. **Participation by consultation**. Participation takes place via "consultation" with professionals in which the professionals define both problems and solutions and these may be changed based on the public's responses. The public's inputs may not be taken into consideration, as professionals are not obliged to do so.

4. **Participation for material incentives**. Participation takes place through resource provision in the form of labour in return for food and cash. This typology typically takes place in rural environments where, for example, farmers provide the fields but are not "involved" in the experiment or social learning process. The people have no stake in prolonging the activities when the incentives end.

5. **Functional participation**. People "participate" in a group context to meet predetermined objectives related to the programme or project, which may involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisations. This type of "involvement" tends not to occur at the early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather once important decisions have already been made.

6. **Interactive participation**. People participate in joint analysis, the development of action plans and capacity-building. Participation is seen as a right, not just a means to achieve programme or project goals.

7. **Self-mobilisation**. People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. This bottom-up approach allows the public to develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but they themselves retain control over how resources are used.

Oakley and Marsden in Oakley (1991:06) state that, “public participation is associated with actions of communities to improve their current situation”. In this regard, the process of public participation through which a community “moves away from a less desirable to a more desirable situation” can be presented as a continuum. This continuum covers four (4) “modes” that overlap with the seven (7) typologies above of Pretty, et al. (1995). The modes are explained as follows:

1. **Anti-participatory mode**. Public participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the public to a programme or project, and will lead to development. However, the public is not expected to take part in shaping the programme or project content and outcomes (Mchunu, 2012:56).

2. **Manipulation mode**. Public participation includes public “involvement” in decision-making processes, implementing programmes and projects, evaluating such programmes and projects and sharing in the benefits (Mchunu, 2012:56).

3. **Incremental mode**. Public participation is concerned with organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations for groups or movements excluded from such control (Mchunu, 2012:56).

4. **Authentic public participation**. Public participation is an active process by which the public influence the direction and execution of a programme or project with a view to enhancing their wellbeing in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values that they cherish (Mchunu, 2012:56) (see IAP2’s Spectrum of Participation below).

Figure 2.1: IAP2's Spectrum of Public

Source: IAP2 (2013)

Arnstein (1969:218) recognised that participation could differ in scope and depth when she formulated eight levels of participation. Seven of the levels overlap with Oakley and Marsden's (1984) modes and the typologies of Pretty, et al. (1995) discussed above. The levels are briefly described below.

1. **Public control**. The public has the degree of power necessary to govern a programme, project or institution without the influence of the powerful.

2. **Delegated power**. The public acquires the dominant decision-making authority over a particular programme or project.

3. **Partnership**. Power becomes distributed through negotiations between the public and those in power.

4**. Placation**. A few "handpicked" members of the public are appointed to committees while tokenism is still the main motivation for the powerful.

5. **Consultation**. The public is free to give opinions on the relevant issues, but the powerful offer no assurance that these opinions will be considered.

6. **Informing**. There is one-way, top-down flow of information in which the public is "informed" of their rights, responsibilities and options.

7. **Therapy**. Instead of focusing on the programme or project, the public's attitudes are "shaped" to conform to those in power.

8. **Manipulation**. The public is part of powerless committees and the notion of public participation is a "public relations" vehicle for the powerful. Public participation becomes "window dressing".

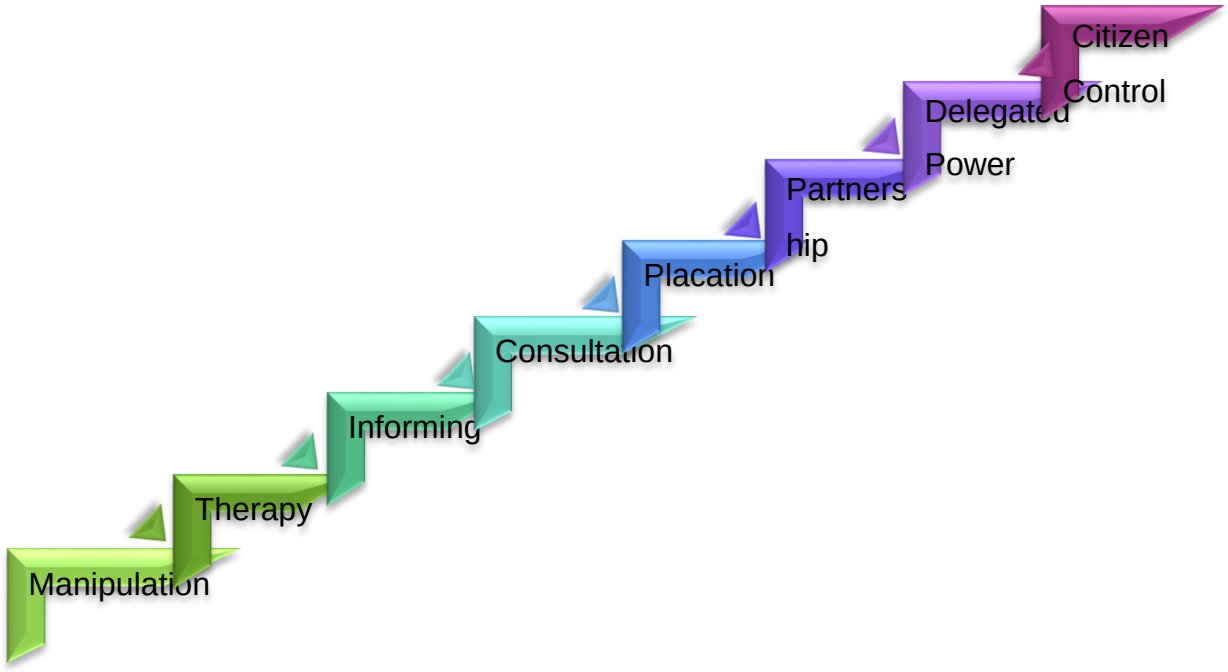


Figure 2.2: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Engagement

Source: Arnstein (1969:216)

The ladder depicts the different stages of participation from manipulation and non-participation to public control and power. Cornwall (2008:270) in Theron & Mchunu, (2014:09-10) argues, "Typologies are a useful starting point for differentiating degrees and kinds of participation". This is shown by, for example, Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public participation that seeks to measure the extent of the public's contribution in the public participation process, as opposed to Pretty, et al. (1995) and their demonstration of different conceptions of public participation, as well as Oakley and Marsden's (1984) depiction of ranges of public participation". This confirms the statement that public participation is "a complex concept and strategy" therefore different people understand, interpret and apply it differently depending on the perspective it is used (Theron, 2008:106; Kumar, 2002:24; Chambers, 2005:104).

An overlap can be deduced when comparing the seven typologies and ladder of participation against modes of public participation. For instance, an anti-participatory mode can be linked with Pretty, et al.'s (1995) passive participation and manipulation level of Arnstein's (1969). Manipulation is associated with Arnstein's (1969) placation,

consultation, informing and therapy and functional participation and participation in information giving as descried by Pretty, et al. (1995). Incremental mode of Oakley and Marsden (1984) can be compared to delegated power of Arnstein (1969) and Pretty, et al' s (1995) interactive participation. Finally, public control and partnership of (Arnstein, 1969) and Pretty, et al. 's (1995) self-mobilisation is comparable to authentic public participation as depicted in the table below.

Table 2.1: Comparison of the Ladder, Typologies and Modes of Public Participation

OAKLEY AND MARSDEN (1984)	ARNSTEIN (1969)	PRETTY, ET AL. (1995)
Anti-participatory mode	Manipulation	Passive participation
Manipulation mode	Placation Consultation Informing Therapy	Functional participation Participation in information giving
Incremental mode	Delegated power	Interactive participation
Authentic public participation	Public control Partnership	Self-mobilisation

Source: Mchunu (2012:56)

2.4 INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The notion of public participation is increasing worldwide and it is encouraged by international and regional agreements between countries, which mostly oblige governments to take steps to improve transparency, participation and accountability. Selected international declarations are discussed below.

2.4.1 The Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development

According to Theron (2009:113), the Manila Declaration (1989) provides four public participation principles that are echoed in the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990). These are as follows:

1. Sovereignty resides with the people, the real actors of positive change. The people themselves know what is best for them and what will bring about positive change in their lives. If sovereignty resides with the people, development must be community driven, community led and community owned (Korten, 1990:44).
2. The legitimate role of government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda. This calls for the recognition from government officials that people are not passive recipients of change, but active participants in their own development. The ideal situation is a partnership between government and the beneficiaries of development whereby government empowers people to implement their own development successfully. The opposite of this can be described as mobilisation rather than empowerment (Korten, 1990:44; Theron, 2008:41-73).
3. To exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, the people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable.
4. Those who would assist the people with their development must recognise that they are the ones who are participating in support of the people's agenda, and not the reverse. The value of the outsider's contribution will be measured in terms of the enhanced capacity of the people to determine their own future.

The above idealistic principles are echoed in the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990), which is discussed next.

2.4.2 The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990)

The International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa was held in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, from 12 to 16 February 1990. This was a rare, collaborative effort between African people's organisations, African governments, non-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies. The aim of the conference was to search for a shared understanding of the role of popular participation in the development and transformation of the region (Davids, et al., 2009:215). The conference also provided an opportunity for delegates to articulate and give renewed focus to the concepts of

democratic development, people's solidarity, creativity and self-reliance, and to formulate policy recommendations for national governments, popular organisations and the international community in order to strengthen participatory processes and patterns of development. (Theron & Mchunu, 2014:22).

According to Davids, et al. (2009:215), the objectives of the conference were as follows:

1. To recognise the role of public participation in Africa's recovery and development efforts.
2. To sensitise national governments and the international community to the dimensions, dynamics, processes and potential of a development approach, rooted in popular initiatives and self-reliant efforts.
3. To identify obstacles to public participation in development and define appropriate approaches to the promotion of popular participation in policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmers and projects.
4. To recommend actions to be taken by governments, the United Nations system, as well as public and private donor agencies in building an enabling environment for authentic popular participation in the development process and to encourage people and their organisations to undertake self-reliant development initiatives.
5. To facilitate the exchange of information, experience and knowledge for mutual support among people and their organisations.
6. To propose indicators for the monitoring of progress in facilitating public participation in Africa's development (Theron & Mchunu, 2014:111-128).

It is important to note that this conference took place during the rule of the apartheid government in South Africa, which did not prioritize participation whatsoever. There has been progress towards the implementation of the recommendations of the conference in the current democratic government. This is demonstrated by the enactment of legislation to promote popular participation. However, a lot still needs to be done to ensure that authentic popular participation in development initiatives is realised (Theron & Mchunu, 2014:22).

2.4.3 Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation, formulated by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2002)

Additional to the international and regional declaration above, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2002) formulated the following core values for the practice of public participation:

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
4. The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the "involvement" of those potentially affected.
5. The public participation process "involves" participants in defining how they participate.
6. The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.
7. The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

(Theron & Mchunu, 2014:114).

2.5 PARLIAMENTS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is defined by Hansard Society (2011a:08) as "the range of activities whose primary function is to raise awareness of the Parliament amongst the public and to facilitate a two-way flow of information, ideas and views, between them, requiring both listening and interaction on the part of both the institution and the citizen". Parliament around the world share a common challenge the public they serve are not aware of its role and are not particularly satisfied with them as institutions despite the 128th Assembly of IPU in (2013) noting that "information and knowledge are essential elements of an effective democracy". The Public is unable to "influence" parliament's processes unless they are knowledgeable about parliament

similarly they can't hold the institution and the elected representatives to account unless they can "influence" the institution (Hansard Society, 2011a:07). Democratic deficits between the public and their parliaments is growing as a result of political detachment, lengthy channels of accountability, complex laws and policies, decreasing coverage by traditional media and the expanding growth of new media (Hansard Society, 2011a:07). As a reaction to this, parliaments globally resolved to embrace public participation. Parliament's role of public participation has developed to an extent that in some parliaments it receives similar attention as traditional roles of passing laws, oversight on the executive and representation. New departments have been created, new services developed, and programmes expanded (Leston-Bandeira and Bender, 2013:282).

It is important to note that whilst some parliaments have adopted public participation as one of their core functions, the public participation strategies are still in their infancy and it will take some time to yield results. There have been technological developments, which saw the rapid change in the public participation field, however despite these developments; there is no single comprehensive resource for parliaments to draw on ideas and examples of good practice (Hansard Society, 2011a:08).

Many parliaments are beginning to realise the importance of the internet as a leading means of communication with the citizens creating the emergence of e-parliament. Besides the traditional public participation strategies, such as committee meetings, outreach programmes and petitions, many parliaments are beginning to use technology to engage with the public.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter broadly outlined the concept of public participation and its relationship to democracy. This chapter further demonstrates the importance of public participation in the advancement of democracy. According to USAID (2005) in Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD) (2011:19), "greater involvement of people in decision making is essential for the advancement of democracy, the promotion of good governance and to the achievement of peace and stability in a country".

The literature reviewed demonstrated that lack of participation in government decisions promotes lack of accountability, transparency and increases public frustration which often leads to public protests. This might lead to downsized democracy. Parliaments and MPs are responsible for ensuring that democracy and good governance is promoted. It is therefore important that there is a regular two-way relationship between MPs and the public (GPAD, 2011:19). For better understanding of public participation, the levels, typologies, modes and core values of public participation were discussed. In relation to this, other key concepts related to the study were clarified. The international declarations, which guides the application of public participation, were also discussed to guide this study.

The following chapter will explore the role of SMTs in advancing public participation efforts in parliaments.

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES (SMTS)

This chapter defines and explains the use of SMTs as a strategy to enhance public participation in parliaments. As most of the SMTs use internet and other ICT platforms the chapter will briefly look at ICT to give context to SMTs. This will be followed by how parliaments have adopted the use of SMTs in their daily operations and how they attempt to leverage on it to advance public participation in the law-making process. The next section provides an analysis of various parliaments which have adopted and incorporated SMTs in their strategy to enhance public participation.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Information travels at remarkable speeds within and across various communication networks known as ICTs. With this technology, considerable amounts of information are transferred in a matter of seconds allowing for the engagement of people in many ways. With its ability to integrate all actors in a unified fusion, ICT is regarded as a powerful tool capable of creating change (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 04-06:2010). A recent development in the ICT sector is the introduction of SMTs which mostly use mobile cellular devices to communicate. According to the 2013 statistics by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), total mobile-cellular subscriptions reached almost six billion by the end of 2011, conforming to global penetration of 86 percent.

Figure 3.1: Global Digital Snapshot (2017)

Over and above creating new networks for distributing information, technology has also led to new patterns of interaction between people and organisations, which create new forms of “social involvement” and relationships. As a result, a new technology-enabled public sphere of communication is created, which facilitates social discourse not restricted by geography, time and political interests (Mason & Hacker, 2003 in Pillay & Maharaj, 2010:01). This is made possible by the use of SMTs, which allows the users to create their own content and communicate with each other anytime anywhere.

According to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (WSIS, 2003) “the most recent global developments in the ICT sector that are transforming communication and participation efforts have prioritised the dual role of ICT in enabling public participation”. Dutton (2009:02) argues that with the dawn of ICT, the use of SMTs to enhance accountability is giving rise to a Fifth Estate. SMTs have been used to organise protests which in some cases resulted in change in government. SMTs was key to participation in the so called “Arab Springs” few years ago (WEPR, 2012:22).

A recent example is the curtailed coup d’état in Turkey where the President took to SMTs to request that citizens defend their country when military forces captured the state and private media outlets, and used state television to broadcast their message and prematurely declare victory. According to the Finance 24 article of 18 July 2016 by Mohamed El-Erian: “Within hours of the beginning of the coup, Erdogan used the video capability on his mobile phone to communicate with the nation, urging Turks to take to the streets and stand up to the rebels. His message was amplified on social media channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, and supplemented by images of people standing in front of tanks and on top of them” (Finance 24 article of 18 July 2016 by Mohamed El-Erian). This demonstrates the immediacy, power and multi directional ability of SMTs.

According to the 2015 SA Social Media Landscape Report by World Wide Worx and Fuseware, Facebook continues to be the most prevalent in South Africa, followed by YouTube and Twitter. The number of YouTube and Instagram users in South Africa increased over the past year by 53% and 65% respectively. By August 2014, YouTube had reached an active user base of 7.2 million, making it second to Facebook’s 11.8

million in social network use in South Africa. Instagram grew to 1.1 million in 2014. Twitter's rise has slowed, although it still grew strong by 20% in the past year to 6.6 million users. The professional network LinkedIn has leapt by 40%, to 3.8 million users in South Africa (www.worldwideworx.com; www.fuseware.net). A majority of internet users are young, with 86% of 18-29 year olds using them daily. Equally, 72% of adults and 87% of teens use text messages daily (Kemp, 2016).

3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY DEFINED

Based on the above-mentioned statistics on the use of SMTs globally and in South Africa and the potential features of SMTs, it is important for Parliament to explore it as one of the strategies to enhance public participation in its processes.

According to Bertot et al. (2010:374), SMTs are "a set of online tools that are designed for and centred around social interaction that offer citizens opportunity to connect, share opinions, experiences, views, contacts, knowledge, expertise etc". They belong to a new genre of media that focuses on social networking, which allows users to freely express and publish their views on issues on the web (Adibe (2012:06). It allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content on the website, providing meaningful dialogic and interactive opportunities (Duffey and Foley, 2011:201, Sadeghi, 2012:126). Criado, et al. (2013:320) believes that SMTs allow public agencies to foster engagement with citizens and other organisations using the philosophy of "Web 2.0".

According to Adibe (2012:07) SMTs emerged with the advent of the internet and the World Wide Web as they are usually associated with the term "Web 2.0" which is used to describe websites that provide opportunity for a user to interact with the sender of a message. It is a state of the web from 2004 to date, as opposed to "Web1.0" which describes the state of the web prior to 2004. Criado et al. (2013:320) defines "Web 2.0" as "a collection of social media through which individuals are active participants in creating, organizing, editing, combining, sharing, commenting, and rating Web content as well as forming a social network through interacting and linking to each other". Examples of "Web 2.0" includes web-based communities, social networking sites, video-sharing sites, Wikis, and blogs.

Boyd (2008:92) therefore sees SMT as an umbrella term that refers to “a set of strategies, services and applications that allow people to interact with others using network technologies.”

Bertot, et al. (2010:267) assert that “SMTs have four major potential strengths: collaboration, participation, empowerment and time. It is collaborative and participatory by its very nature as it is defined by social interaction. It can be empowering to its users as it gives them a platform to speak. It allows anyone with access to the internet the ability to publish or broadcast information with less costs, effectively democratizing media. In terms of time, SMTs allow users to immediately publish information in near-real time”. This resonates well with the last two stages of IAP2’s Spectrum of public participation, which emphasises collaboration and empowerment towards authentic public participation, self-mobilisation and public control as outlined by Oakley and Marsden (1984), Pretty et al (1995) and Arnstein (1969).

This conglomeration of SMTs can be classified into two different groups depending on its main purpose. Firstly, as expressive SMTs, which enable people to express themselves by sharing with others via text, picture, video and music. Examples of these are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Foursquare. Secondly, as collaborative SMTs, which enable people to work together to achieve common goals through interactive and social activities. Wiki and Google Docs are examples of this category (Scott, 2006:345; Bertot, et al, 2010:267, Lee and Kwak, 2012:492). SMTs also include other electronic communication systems, such as email, the internet and voicemail (Maritz, 2014:39). Parliament can categorise the use of SMTs to suit their needs. For example the expressive SMTs can be used to invite public to engage with Parliament on the issues that needs public input while collaborative SMTs can be used to get relevant stakeholders to work in collaboration with Parliament to achieve a common goal.

While they are used for different purposes and take different approaches these technologies, also put emphasis on empowering users to communicate widely. SMTs depend on content generated by the public as opposed to traditional media, which relies on professionals to generate content. Adibe (2012:06) agrees with this view in that SMTs support the demonstration of knowledge and information, thereby making

the people both information producers and consumers, which is one of the distinguishing features of SMTs from traditional media that only make people consumers. Unlike the passive nature of the “old” media, it allows fluidity and flexibility between the role of audience and author (Duffey and Foley, 2011:201). Traditional media is designed to be a broadcast platform, i.e. one-to-many, while SMTs are designed to be a dialogue, i.e. many-to-many. This is another important feature, which allows large groups of geographically dispersed users to produce valuable information resources to solve challenging problems by tapping into unique and rare expertise and gain diverse insights and perspectives through discussion (Bertot, et al, 2010:374, Criado, et al, 2013:320).

Bechmann and Lomborg (2012:03) in Maritz (2014:39) identify three user friendly attributes of SMTs: “Firstly, the user is conceptualised to play a dual role, that of a participant and a producer, secondly, the user’s ability to create, provide, censor or share information and lastly, the manner in which the user and that of the participants communicate are typically ‘interactive and are networked’”. This description of these three features provide an interesting angle to the debate on public participation, given that the user may be either empowered or exploited, depending on the perspective one elects to use (Maritz, 2014:39).

SMTs challenge the lack of opportunity for public participation because they promote participation, openness, conversation and connectedness. They also make publication and promotion of a diverse range of minority and alternative viewpoints relatively straightforward at a low-cost. It is in this context that MPs are starting to harness the web to communicate with their constituents, themselves circumventing traditional media outlets (Hansard Society, 2009:02).

There is no doubt that the momentum for increased engagement with citizens is being assisted by innovations ICT especially SMTs. This new media has opened up exceptional new possibilities of engaging the public in government work and has changed the public's expectations about how government work should be done (Lee & Kwak, 2012:492). Magro (2012, 492:151) agrees, indicating that SMTs have the potential to promote a positive perception of government through dissemination of information and by providing a platform for citizen and government interaction. SMTs therefore carry great potential for public participation.

SMTs provides important opportunities for government: firstly, it provides opportunity for democratic participation and engagement, using SMTs to engage the public in government and fostering participatory dialogue as well as providing a voice in discussions of policy development and implementation. Secondly, it provides for co-production, in which governments and the public jointly develop, design, and deliver government services to improve service quality, delivery, and responsiveness. Lastly, it provides opportunities for crowdsourcing solutions and innovations, seeking innovation through public knowledge and talent to develop innovative solutions to large-scale societal issues (Bertot et al. 2010; Bertot, 2012:30-34).

3.3 THEORETICAL VIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

It is important to present a theoretical view in an effort to explain and give context to the concepts being studied. Three theories relating to SMTs will be presented. The first is the social network theory. This theory explains the tools by which social interactions can stimulate or hinder individual and collective behaviour (Adibe, 2012:09). Israel (1985, cited in Adibe, 2012:09) notes that this theory emphasises the importance of “social network”, which refers to the set of linkages and social relationships between/among members of society. This theory explains how SMTs can promote social interaction, which is key in influencing the action by society particularly during elections, sustenance of democracy and fostering of good governance (Adibe, 2012:09).

The second theory applicable to this study is the uses and gratification theory, which belongs to the limited or indirect effect theories of mass communication (Adibe, 2012:09). This theory is focussed on how people use media and not what media do to them (Anaeto, et al. 2008:71; in Adibe, 2012:09). This theory assumes that people are not influenced by the effects of media and instead influence how the media affects them. This theory takes a more humanistic approach to media use and effect. The assumption is that the audience is “actively involved” in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. They are not “passive participants” but rather use the media to fulfil specific gratifications (Adibe, 2012:10).

This theory points out that public selectively choose which media messages they would like to attend and retain based on their needs and the satisfaction they derive from those messages (Okoro (2001) in Adibe, 2012:10).

This theory therefore emphasises the importance of people in the process of communication as they select content, interpret it and act on their interpretation of the content. The relevance of this theory to this study is based on the assumption that users of SMTs are intentional seekers of such messages as it allows them to choose and use the technology the way they like, making them active participants. Similarly, it allows politicians to choose their own content, and media platform on which to publish this content, for their various campaigns.

The last theory is the gatekeeping theory created by Kurt Lewin in 1947 (Anaeto, et al. 2008:91) to ensure that information is "screened" before it is distributed to the public. It is based on the assumption that the communicator has a moral duty, over and above legal restrictions, to publish content that is "socially acceptable" to the audience. This theory is relevant to this study because the nature and power of SMTs means they should be strictly monitored and highly regulated to avoid possible abuse (Adibe, 2012:10). This is one of the challenges that parliaments face, there is a "fine line" between official and non-official information, and the fact that Parliament is made up of three divisions that is the administration, political parties and Parliament itself. This needs serious monitoring if public participation is to be realised as the public can easily be confused by especially the party information and parliament information. This will be considered in detail in the following section.

3.4 SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN PARLIAMENTS

For a long time, parliaments were institutions representing the public, but without the need to actively communicate with this same public. This has changed dramatically over the last decade. Because of rapidly declining levels of trust, parliaments have come to portray the face and cause of political disengagement, often portrayed as closed, old fashioned, and inaccessible democratic institutions (Hansard Society, 2011a; IPU, 2012). As a reaction to this, internationally parliaments have turned to public engagement by actively developing strategies to promote it; these include educational programmes and creating SMT accounts (Leston-Bandeira and Bender, 2013:282). IPU (2012:35-36) believes that "SMTs can help lessen the detachment between people and the institution by making it more "human" as they are a powerful way to connect with people who would normally not engage with parliaments" (IPU,

2012:35-36). Duffey and Foley (2011:199) support this notion by arguing that SMTs provide a potentially valuable avenue for community engagement in the parliamentary process. Online “consultations” are specifically noted as an attractive means for people to make their views heard without making unreasonable demands on their time. The use of such methods may also help to improve public perceptions of parliaments.

The 128th Assembly of IPU, which took place in Quito (Ecuador), 22-27 March 2013, unanimously adopted the use of media including SMTs to enhance public participation and democracy. It encourages parliaments to use SMTs to interact with the public, while ensuring that SMTs do not replace offline engagement, including traditional media. The resolution also urges parliamentarians to use SMTs to increase their engagement with youth and raise youth related problems, needs and aspirations (IPU, 2013). This is important because reports indicated that the youth is not actively engaged in parliament work even though they are in the majority and represent the highest percentage of SMT users when compared with other age groups.

The popularity and power of SMTs and the rapid dissemination of mobile communication devices and applications throughout the world persuaded many parliaments to explore these tools to reach out to citizens and gather their comments and views during the legislative process. The challenge is to determine how these new forms of communication can be employed (IPU, 2012:23). To overcome this, Williamson, (2013:07) suggests three main aspects of SMTs that parliaments need to consider. Firstly, SMTs are a new and effective way for parliaments to be closer to the public; secondly, they are subject to rules and norms that informally govern the way they work; and, lastly, they are fast-moving and dynamic spaces for networking and sharing.

According to Leston-Bandeira and Bender (2013:283), SMTs have a potential to develop parliaments’ ability to promote more substantive engagement with the institution. It is important for parliaments to note that SMTs has the capacity to boost public participation because of its openness, conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristics appeal (Bradley, 2009, in Adibe, 2012:07). With the use of SMTs parliaments will have direct access to citizens not mediated by the media or parties, more direct access to a younger public, the possibility to react

more quickly to news and events, the possibility to engage the public into a conversation and the possibility to target issues that are more specific.

Duffey and Foley (2011:199) state that there is a lack of interest amongst people to participate in political decision-making; they prefer to be represented by their representatives. Although they want their voice heard, they prefer limited level of "involvement" in the process and, if they get involved, they prefer options that demand little time and commitment from them. New ICT tools, especially SMTs, seem to hold much promise as a means of delivering the limited engagement desired by cynical, time-poor citizens (Duffey & Foley, 2011:199).

The increased participation of citizens enabled by these tools can serve to increase the accountability of parliaments by facilitating the public's scrutiny of their deliberations. Enhanced scrutiny and accountability can realise a more open democracy (Kindra & Stapenhurst, 2010:280). While there is a need for parliaments to move away from the unidirectional transmission of communication and adopt real-time multidirectional ability provided by SMTs to connect with the people, it is clear that there is an increasing appreciation by parliaments that SMTs offer powerful tools to reach out to and interact with the public. It is important that the introduction of these tools is incremental (Kindra & Stapenhurst, 2010:280).

There has been progress made by parliaments in the use of SMTs and, according to IPU (2016:06), SMTs have led to and supported major changes in the operational environment and cultural landscape of parliaments. Digital parliament is now a living entity, directly linked to those it serves in ways that were previously hard to imagine. Formerly, parliaments were regarded as conservative and inward looking; however, that picture has changed, as parliaments are now more open and outward facing. Parliament now resembles the world around it; they regard SMTs as important tools allowing citizens to connect more often and more easily with MPs (IPU, 2016:06). Since 2008, parliaments have started to open Facebook and Twitter accounts as extra channels of communication with the public. As of June 2013, 29 percent of national parliaments all over the world had a Facebook and/or Twitter account (Leston-Bandeira and Bender, 2013:02). Amongst the SMTs used by parliaments, Twitter is clearly the favoured tool for communicating with citizens, as indicated in the figure 3.2.

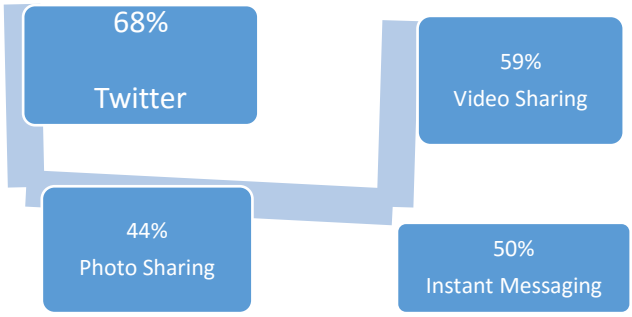


Figure 3.2: Social Media Platforms Used in Parliaments

Source: IPU (2016)

Figure 3.2 above also indicates that a substantial number of parliaments are using instant messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, to reach citizens. Video sharing and photo sharing are also popular methods. Largely 55 percent of parliaments stated that SMTs has improved their capacity to disseminate information and 48 percent stated that their use has significantly improved their interaction with citizens (IPU, 2016:28). Even though many parliaments indicated that they have SMT accounts, the number of people using those tools are still very low and they are faced with many challenges. The South African parliament is one of those parliaments still lacking in this regard as they are not as active on SMTs as they are expected to be despite having established a good footprint. The following section focuses on the use of different SMTs by various parliaments and the challenges faced by parliaments in the use of SMTs.

3.5 SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES: COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARLIAMENTS

3.5.1 Introduction

The number of parliaments using SMTs, especially Facebook and Twitter, as additional channels of communication with citizens has grown to 29 percent since 2008 with Latin America leading, surpassing Europe. Some of the most innovative use of digital means to integrate citizens into parliamentary business can be found in Latin America. See, for instance, e-Democracia, or the Chilean Virtual Senator (IPU,

2016:58-60). For this study, the focus will be on parliaments of the United Kingdom, Chile, USA, France, Catalan and Germany.

3.5.2 United Kingdom

During the 2014 World e-Parliament, Mr. Archy Kirkwood, Chairman of the Information Committee of the House of Lords, emphasised that it is critical to create connections between people and Parliament on how Parliament can engage with the public and enable the public to communicate with it. He stated that the main achievements in the use of SMTS includes ensuring that parliamentary proceedings are available in several formats (IPU, 2016:58-60). These includes, website, blogs, Online forums, YouTube etc. The UK Parliament's website (www.parliament.uk) rates highly in terms of content as compared to other parliaments. The website was revamped and the new features includes having a page for each committee and, each committee inquiry has its own section. This enables site visitors to follow an inquiry much more effectively (Hansard Society, 2011b: 15). However, despite the revamp, the committee pages are quite rigid compared to other parliaments (Hansard Society 2011b: 40-41).

The House of Lords also use a collaborative blog to facilitate direct dialogue with the public. The blog is an independent forum for MPs to talk about their life and work with a broad online audience. The blog's most unique feature, is that a blogging Lord is willing to follow up on questions/comments (Hansard Society 2011b: 40-41). The UK Parliament also use online forums to receive inputs from the public during committee inquiries as an alternative to traditional, written submissions (Hansard Society 2011b: 40-41). This forum has helped broaden the reach of committee inquiries at Westminster (Hansard Society 2011b: 40-41).

The main challenges faced by the House of Lords in making use of participatory media include the following: reaching the apathetic; making participation meaningful whilst respecting representative democratic traditions; providing accessible information; respecting the resulting scrutiny; reaching the digitally excluded; and managing the digital security risks (IPU, 2016:58-60). Over 1.12 million people follow the House of Commons (HoC) on Twitter, with at least 13 600 Tweets to date (Source: Twitter/UK Parliament). Their Facebook page has 320 179 likes, Flickr has 726 followers and YouTube, 52 925 subscribers (UK Parliament Website 2016).

Figure 3.3: Facebook and Twitter Pages of UK Parliament

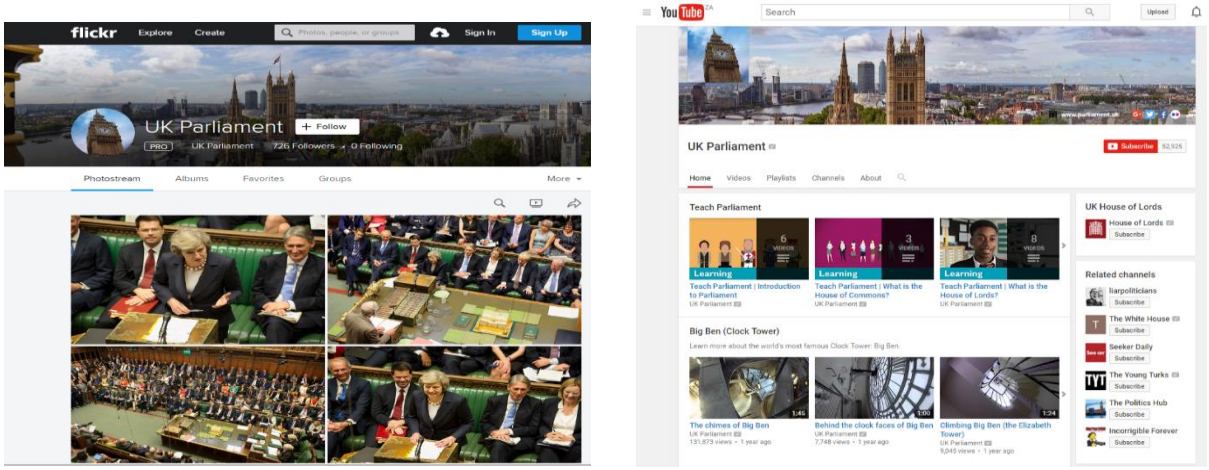


Figure 3.4: Flikr and YouTube Pages of UK Parliament

3.5.3 US Congressional Assembly

In the US the committees are encouraged to get the basics right. This include posting all information online, from legislation, hearing schedule, to webcasts of past hearings and witness testimony, reports and other publications. The information rich content on the website serve all the users, be it novices wanting to know more about the committee or experts searching for more in-depth information, they are all catered for. This is supplemented by leveraging SMTs to allow users to send comments to the committee, subscribe to RSS feeds and e-newsletters, or follow the work of the committee on Twitter to keep abreast of its latest actions (Hansard Society 2011b: 17).

The sites are criticized for their lack of standardisation in the design and features, with some having extremely poor static sites, with inappropriate layout and designs. By incorporating information directly into the parliamentary website, users will spend more time engaging with parliament directly rather than external websites. It is also beneficial in terms of reputation, transparency and accountability that any parliamentary institution should publish this level of detail about its business and the conduct of its members (Hansard Society 2011b: 17).

3.5.4 The French National Assembly

The French National Assembly operates a moderated forum “for open and constructive debate” to “allow visitors to share ideas and arguments in a reasoned and courteous way”. It does not provide two-way interaction with members, but all contributions are passed to the relevant member or rapporteur on an on-going basis. Where the discussion concerns a particular bill, for example, then the information is fed to the MPs responsible for reviewing the bill with the contributions from the forum attached as an appendix to the relevant committee report. Once registered with the forum contributors can add as many comments as they wish. Some issues do attract many comments, but as contributors can and do make multiple comments the number of comments far exceeds the actual number of participants. As with many blog sites, the contributions are often negative and critical in tone and the quality of engagement, and the benefit to the members, can therefore be limited (Hansard Society, 2011b:40).

3.5.5 Chilean Congress

Mr. Ramón Farías Ponce, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, during the 2014 World e-Parliament, highlighted that “participatory media are powerful tools of political change which can reinforce the communication between society and political authorities, and enhance political participation” (IPU, 2016:58-60). The Congress of Chile introduced the programme Democracia en Vivo (www.democraciaenvivo.cl), which allows citizens to follow the discussion of bills during the parliamentary sessions and to express their views to the members live. This allows citizens to communicate directly with their representatives and obtain immediate answers to their concerns (IPU, 2016:58-60).

Another interesting innovation in Chile is the introduction of the Senador Virtual (Virtual Senator) portal. This is an online voting system used to directly engage the public on specific policy proposals being considered by the legislature. Participants are directed to online resources that give them background information on the issues. They can then vote for or against certain proposals within a bill and post their own comments for other participants and Senators to read. Responses are forwarded to the Senate at the committee stage, where they can help to influence legislative outcomes (Hansard Society, 2011b: 40-41). To avoid corruption voters are required to register by setting up an account. Participants are updated on the progress of the bills via email. They also receive feedback on the issue that interests them and they can consequently see whether their contribution and views have been reflected in the overall legislative decision (Hansard Society, 201b1: 40-41).

The site allows the Senators and officials to draw on both the voting results and the comments made by participants to inform their deliberations. At the end of the voting process the results and information are archived but are readily accessible via the site (Hansard Society, 2011b: 40-41). The system is easy to use which allows people from different backgrounds to participate in the democratic process in an informal manner. However, it is not proactively marketed or promoted (Hansard Society, 2011b: 40-41). The Chilean Congress has a following of 102 000 and has posted 43 800 Tweets, while Flickr has 27 followers with 44 following (Congress of Chile Website, 2016).

Figure 3.6: Chilean Congress Twitter page and Flickr Page

3.5.6 Catalan Parliament

The Catalan Parliament is a good example of a parliament that effectively collects information about its elected representatives in an accessible way, together with broader information about the Parliament itself. It deploys a portal for public participation, “Parliament 2.0” which is, a one-stop shop for information about MPs, Parliament, and how the public can participate (Hansard Society, 2011b: 18).

The challenge is with the design of some aspects of the site, which are not particularly attractive, and the quality and breadth of content varies considerably, although this in part reflects the relative size of the institution and its regional focus. However, the one-stop shop concept is an interesting and transferable one that, if combined with a commitment to providing greater information about MPs, could provide a powerful online presence and more accessible information about their role and function in other legislatures (Hansard Society 2011b: 18).

3.5.7 German Bundestag

The German Bundestag introduced online “consultations” in 2008 where two MPs representing the ruling party and the opposition meet every Thursday to debate issues online with the public. The forum “chats” were organised by the Bundestag internet division in partnership with Politik Digital, a non-profit organisation. The role of Politik Digital was to invite the MPs, moderate the “chat” and provide the software (Talk 42). This was an opportunity for less prominent MPs to present their viewpoint and to engage directly with the public on issues being discussed that week in plenary debates. The “reach” of this initiative was limited because the number of participants varied between 33 and 120. There was positive media coverage of this initiative. It was also cost effective and the cost were covered by Politik Digital with three to four hours of preparation time per session, largely communicating with the participating members and liaising with the press (Hansard Society, 2011b: 42-45). This was piloted for six weeks.

3.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARLIAMENTS WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

In this emerging area of online interaction between citizens and parliaments, there is very little in the way of practical guidance or lessons learned for parliaments. While they present an opportunity for parliaments to enhance public participation. SMTs present a number of challenges to parliaments:

- Management challenges for parliaments, such as the development of usage policies and the allocation of responsibilities and resources. Additional to these, financial resources, staff capacity and member knowledge are identified as challenges by most parliaments regardless of size or income level.
- The use of SMTs in parliaments also raises questions about the dissemination of public and non-public information and its integration with other tools such as video, SMS messaging, web sites, blogs and e-mail.
- Parliament is not always sure how to respond to the public's comments through this medium.
- The digital divide as a result of inadequate Internet access and IT skills are also identified as some of the major challenges for developing countries especially in Africa.
- Parliaments are collective entities, therefore the use of SMTs can slow down decision-making as there are naturally differing and opposing agendas because of its political nature and there is no single voice because of the dual leadership structure (political and administrative).
- The deliberative potential of SMTs will always be constrained in the parliamentary context event though it plays an important role in parliaments, because their protocols are different to those of traditional media.
- SMTs require tailored content, long reports produced by parliaments are a challenge on these platforms. For example, Twitter can only take 140 characters.
- The other challenge for parliaments is the management and moderation of content.

- There is also uncertainty surrounding the application of parliamentary privilege to online communication and the need to protect vulnerable participants from the possible negative consequences of involvement in a committee inquiry.

(World e-Parliament Report, 2010:110; Williamson, 2013:06, Duffey & Foley, 2011:199, IPU, 2016:55-60).

In addition to the challenges above Mr. Kirkwood in IPU (2016:58-60) observed that one of the major challenges point towards changing the mind-set in the use of technology, which is more demanding and takes more time than technological change itself. Mr. Farías in IPU (2016:58-60) on the other hand observed that the main challenge for parliaments is to create platforms aimed at increasing transparency, oversight and citizens' participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies. Through SMTs, communication between MPs and citizens is moving from unidirectional to bidirectional forms, and MPs should use these powerful tools to encourage citizens' participation in politics and to overcome the crisis of representation. This would only be possible if there is a political will to give real power to citizens and build a concrete participatory democracy (IPU, 2016:58-60). However, Hon. Frolick in IPU (2016:58-60) cautions that while participatory media plays a crucial role in the promotion of dialogue and interaction between citizens and elected representatives, it should not replace the critical need for direct interaction between citizens and their elected representatives. It is therefore important to bridge the digital divide to ensure that people living in rural areas as well as people with little computer literacy participate in the law-making process (IPU, 2016:58-60).

While parliaments are adopting SMTs it is important to ensure there is a proper and fine-tuned balance between the use of new and traditional communication strategies. Parliaments should also take cognisance that SMTs do not exist in a vacuum; their use depends on context and is subject to existing codes of practice for communication and the appropriate use of digital media. While they act in accordance with protocols and align with internal communication and engagement strategies, SMTs operate in their own space and according to their own set of rules, beyond the influence or control of parliaments (IPU, 2016:58).

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC PARTICPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

4.1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

4.1.1 Introduction

Parliament strives to build a "people's parliament" that is responsive to the needs of all the people of South Africa. It endeavours to create a transformed, democratic and open society that improves quality of life for all, ensures meaningful and active public participation that educates and informs people and provides access to Parliament. This vision is closely linked to one of Parliament's core objectives of facilitating public participation (The Parliamentarian, 2013:10).

The citizens popularly refer to Parliament as a "people's parliament." This is because since the dawn of democracy, its vision was, and remains, to build a truly representative people's Parliament (PPM, 2015:01). This is made possible by the Constitution (1996) that puts the rights of the citizens first. Ben-Zeev (2012:18) notes that "the 'architects' of South Africa's transition envisioned its democracy as not only representative, but also participatory". This is the case because South Africa's democracy boasts a constitutional democracy founded on a dual yet complementary approach to governance, in which the first pillar comprises representative democracy and the second, participatory democracy (Ashton, 2013:03; De Villiers, 2001:19). The Public Participation Model (PPM) (2015:01) argues that in a representative context the MPs represent the views of the electorate whilst in a participatory democracy the public is actively "involved" in decision-making processes, such as law-making and oversight.

The aim of public participation in legislative and policy-making activities is to offer poor people a platform to have their voices heard by allowing them an opportunity to make their circumstances known and to express their needs and grievances (De Villiers, 2002:32). If implemented correctly (which is not the case) in Parliament should

influence decision-making processes that reflects “the will of the people” (PPM 2015: ix).

4.1.2 Historical Background of Public Participation in Parliament

Even though the idea of participatory democracy is new in South Africa, the experience of democratic participation during the struggle against apartheid provides the basis for our democracy. Most communities and activists were exposed to active political participation through trade unions, community structures and civic organisations (Klug, et al., 1996:45). Booysen (2011:02) states “public participation in the processes of policy and governance in democratic South Africa could be regarded as a cornerstone of society”. It is one important key principle of democracy and is without doubt a key factor in the nature of the democracy. As much as participation is necessary for democracy and good governance, it is also significant to societal development (Kabemba, 2003; GPL, 2012:23; Booysen, 2011:02).

South Africa as a new democracy intended to emphasise active participation by the citizenry became apparent during negotiations leading to the formation of the new Constitution (1996) (RIPAP, 2009:53). This participatory approach was further reflected in the Constitution (1996) drafting process itself where an ambitious public participation and education programme was initiated by inviting public submissions on the new Constitution (1996) to the Constitutional Assembly. The overwhelming success of this public participation process made it an international reference and it was regarded as the benchmark for all future public participation initiatives. This demonstrates that participatory democracy is possible and has set a tough precedent for government to follow (RIPAP 2009: 54).

Despite this milestone public participation is still not effective in South Africa hence the rate of service delivery protests. This is because of extreme inequalities in the country (Calland, 1999:65). Hamman (2003:21-23) argues that “public participation in South Africa has been plagued by the legacy of apartheid, which exacerbates challenges that are common to public participation, but which are particularly acute in a country with such culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse communities”. The need to create more jobs and grow economic and infrastructure development has overshadowed the government’s emphasis on the need for public participation (Scott, 2009:47; Hamman, 2003:21-22; Buccus, 2008:02).

Prior to democratic government, citizens were not allowed to participate in policy-making processes. Public participation in the legislative process is now open to all citizens including the organised and powerful, marginalised, weak and unorganised and this was made possible by the new Constitution (1996) (PPF, 2013). Crenson and Ginsberg (2002) in PPF (2013:13) caution that by allowing public participation in the legislative process does not by itself guarantee that people will be able to exercise that right, as public participation is often reduced to participation by elite, organised civil society, business and other interest groups with access to resources (PPF, 2013:13; Buccus, 2008:02).

In 2009, the IPU noted that it is important to facilitate a vibrant relationship between Parliament and the people (Hansard Society, 2011a:10). The role of MPs come with great responsibility, as they are required to ensure that the public good is promoted and the most marginalised included in decisions that affect them (Ben-Zeev, 2012:03). It is through this relationship that Parliament can indeed represent the people and ensure "government by the people" as demanded by the Constitution (1996). As former Judge Mr. Sachs indicates, "That phrase in the Constitution (1996) about the public being "involved" was not simply so that the public can watch, [or] make representations to committees; it meant an ongoing act of connection and association. The democratic relationship is not like Sleeping Beauty [who] goes to sleep for five years, is kissed just before elections, wakes up and then goes to sleep again. The organic interactive relationship is important" (Sachs, in Ben-Zeev, 2012:07).

There are a number of sections in the Constitution (1996) that deal directly with public participation, giving the NA and NCOP and all provincial legislatures the responsibility of facilitating public participation. Sections 59(1)(a) and 72(1)(a) of the Constitution (1996) order the NA and the NCOP, respectively, to facilitate the "involvement" of the public in their legislative and other processes and their committees (Buccus, 2007:06; Constitution, 1996). Section 59(2) of the Constitution (1996) indicates the public and media may not be excluded unless it is "reasonably justifiable" to do so in an open and democratic society. The Joint Rules of Parliament, NA and NCOP rules reinforce this. At the most basic level, public participation in the legislative process requires access to the building where the legislature meets (Kurtz, 1997:06).

A number of Constitutional Court judgements affirmed the significance of this commitment, for example in 2006, Doctors for Life International vs Speaker of the NA, the Court ruled against Parliament because it failed to conduct “meaningful participation”. The Court held that Parliament has a constitutional obligation to facilitate public participation by providing meaningful opportunities for the public to engage in the law-making processes and to ensure that people have the ability to take advantage of those opportunities. The understanding of “meaningful participation” for courts is to allow people’s voices to be heard and considered, and possibly have an impact (Jaroszynski, 2009:27; Scott, 2009:50; Ben-Zeev, 2012:18; Waterhouse, 2015:14). Seedat (2006:17) adds that this judgement makes it clear that the legislative timeline should respect the requirements of public participation.

As a result of the Constitution’s (1996) provisions and court decisions, Parliament decided to dedicate the third democratic Parliament (2004-2009) to build a people’s Parliament responsive to the needs of the people by developing oversight and public participation strategies in line with its constitutional mandate (PPM, 2015: v). The fourth democratic Parliament (2009-2014) prioritised the strengthening of the oversight function and increased public participation. This led to the conclusion of the sector-wide Public Participation Framework (PPF), which aims at guiding legislatures in developing their own public participation models (PPM, 2015: v; PPF, 2013:30). The model is discussed below (PPF, 2013:15).

4.1.3 Parliament’s Public Participation Model

4.1.3.1 Overview of the Model

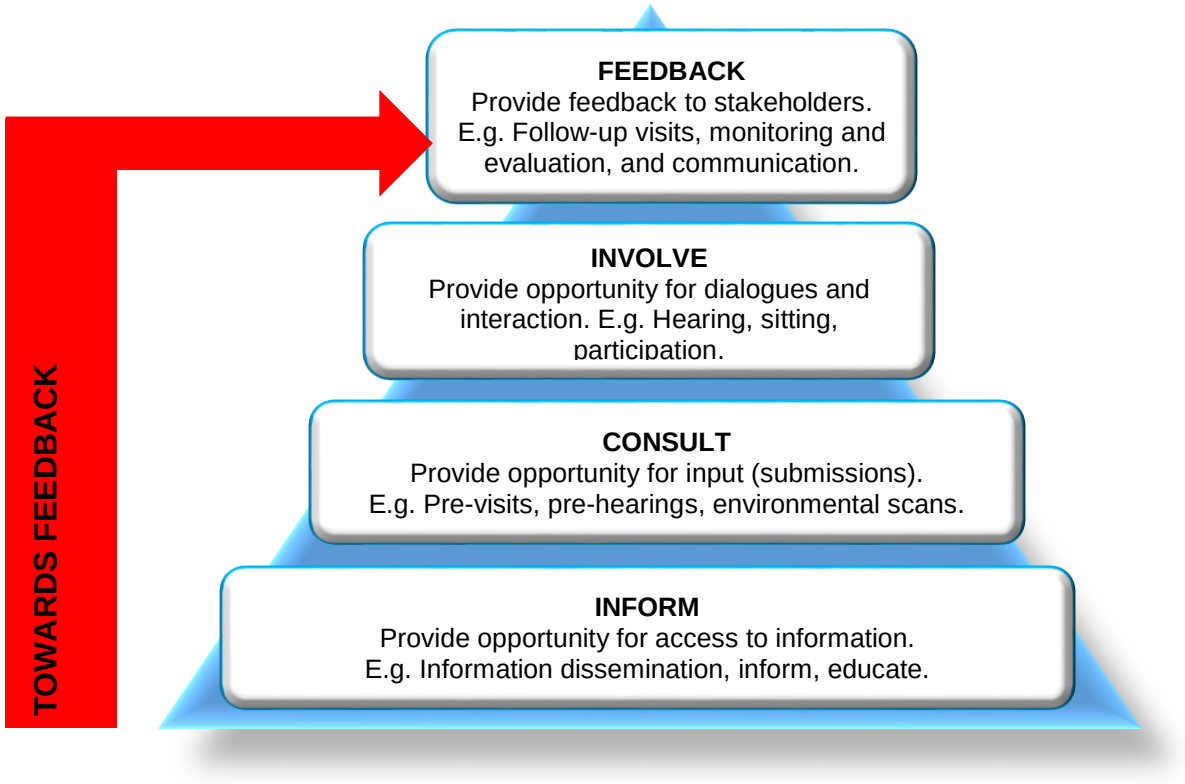
Parliament is at the final stages of the Public Participation Model, which will be launched soon. The proposed model takes into consideration key roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of public participation in Parliament (PPM, 2015:16; Arendse, 2014:89). The Model intends to provide a shared understanding on, and alignment of, processes, and set minimum requirements and guidelines for the “involvement” of the public in legislative and other processes of Parliament and those of its committees. This Model also attempts, although not exhaustively, to set out goals and objectives, outline public participation strategies, determine the best model to fit Parliament, the role of public education and

information dissemination, meaningful public participation opportunity, institutional coordination of public participation programmes and reporting on the outcomes thereof (PPM, 2015; Arendse, 2014:89).

4.1.3.2 Public Participation Model in Parliament

Figure 4.1, adapted from the Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation to reflect a best approach, depicts that each stage of public participation has a corresponding increase in the opportunity for public input to influence or impact on decision-making processes of decisions affecting their lives (PPM, 2015:09, Arendse, 2014:89).

Figure 4.1: Parliament Public Participation Model



Source: Parliament of South Africa: PPM

According to the Model, Parliament sees all the stages as equally important because each stage has the potential to increase the public's opportunity to influence or make input in the law-making process. Most importantly, with this Model Parliament emphasises the importance of informing and educating the public, as well as the need for feedback, monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation is central to ensure tracking the outcomes of a given public participation opportunity and thereby

continuously ensure active citizenry (PPM, 2015:11). Figure 4.2 further outlines the stages that must be followed when public participation is employed in Parliament.

4.1.3.3 Stages for Public Participation

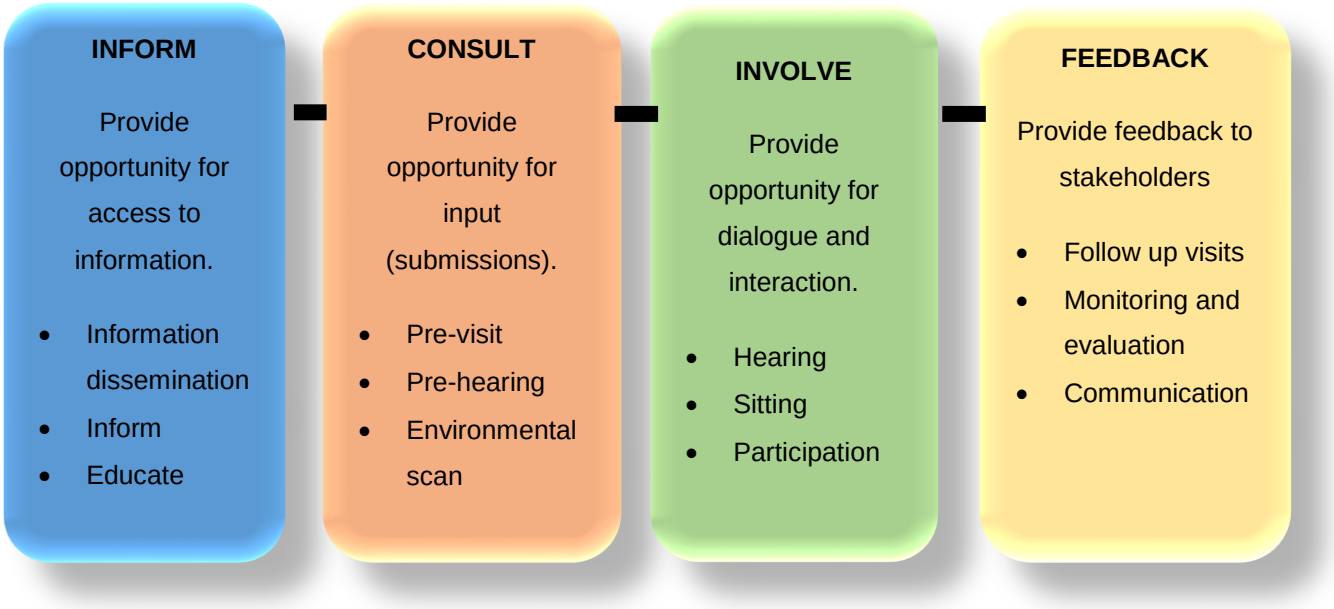


Figure 4.2: Stages of the Public Participation Model

In line with the minimum public participation standards articulated above, the first stage addresses the provision of information and education to the public while the last three stages ensure "meaningful participation" by the public. While the inform stage is the pre-requisite for public participation, the other stages can be deployed based on the context and public interest generated by the related issues at hand (PPM, 2015:11).

For "meaningful public" participation, Parliament must ensure that the appropriate stage of participation is applied. It is therefore important that the public participation process provide for stages of participation that are matching with the level of public interest. (PPM, 2015:11). The model follows the IAP2 Spectrum of public participation but it only focuses on the first three levels which emphasises the top down approach and does not encourage "authenticity" and "empowerment". This does not guarantee that the public's inputs will be considered or influence decision as required by the core values of public participation outlined by IAP2(2002). The model does not allow an opportunity for collaboration and empowerment of the public. This is evident in the

current strategies that Parliament employs to facilitate public participation which will be discussed later. Most of these strategies only inform, consult and involve the public, for example during public hearings people raise their concerns, reports are drafted but feedback is rarely given until the next hearing where same issues will be raised. This model also does not take into consideration the potential of SMTs with regards to public participation.

According to PPM (2015:16), "Public Participation Best Fit Approach is about crafting institutional models that takes into cognisance the institutional characteristics such as goals, culture and business processes". Taking into consideration Parliament's Constitutional mandate to facilitate public participation in its processes, the purpose of this Model is to improve the current public participation strategies employed and to provide feedback to the public (PPM, 2015:16) (See appendix 6).

4.1.4 Parliament's Public Participation Strategies

4.1.4.1 Introduction

Parliament has introduced strategies and outreach programmes to promote "public involvement" in its processes. This came after it was mandated by the Constitution (1996) to create and make its own rules and procedures relating to its business, keeping in mind representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public "involvement" (Muntingh, 2012:39; Mphahlele, 2013:34). Several outreach programmes and Sectoral Parliaments, i.e. Women's Parliament, Youth Parliament and other initiatives like Taking Parliament to the People, public hearings on legislation and committee discussions on annual reports, annual plans and budgets were introduced in the third term of Parliament to extend the public participation platform. All these should afford the public an opportunity to participate in parliament's work (Ben-Zeev, 2012:18; Strategic Plan, 2014-2019:14; Muntingh, 2012:29; RIPAP, 2009:54-55). However, these strategies are not easily accessed by majority of South African because of inequalities in the country, particularly marginalized communities such as rural areas and sectors such as women and youth. They therefore do not automatically benefit poor people and groups that have long faced social exclusion (RIPAP, 2009:54-55; Mphahlele, 2013:35, Buccus, 2007:02).

4.1.4.2 Public Hearings

Committees are regarded as the engines of Parliament dealing with issues such as bills before Parliament before they are debated in the NA and NCOP sittings (Muntingh, 2012:29). The Constitution (1996) directs Parliament that all Bills under consideration by committees should be subject to least one public hearing, depending on whether the bill is of public interest or not (PPM, 2015:36; Baccus, 2008:7-10; De Villiers, 2001:100; Scott, 2009:83).

The researcher believes they are not effective because the hearings are not publicised enough and the public is usually given a short notice for public hearings, which makes it difficult for them to adequately prepare. It has also been noted that the turnout at hearings is not good; this could be as a result of inadequate mobilisation and political apathy because citizens are tired of empty promises. Most issues that are raised are irrelevant to the particular committee because participants want to use the rare opportunity to raise all their concerns (PPM, 2015:36; Baccus, 2008:07-10; De Villiers, 2001:100; Scott, 2009:83).

4.1.4.3 Taking Parliament to the People

Taking Parliament to The People is the NCOP programme whereby MPs literally take Parliament to the people. The programme takes place in the remote areas of the country, normally termed “back of the beyond”, where people would ordinarily not have an opportunity to visit Parliament. The format of the programme includes public meetings, public hearings and site visits to special projects by all spheres of government at once. The programme takes place twice a year for five days, where it culminates in the formal sitting of the NCOP, in which the President and Deputy President deliver their annual address to the NCOP in November and March respectively (PPM, 2015:26-27; Baccus, 2008:7-10; Waterhouse, 2015:48-49; RIPAP,2009:63-69). This programme is costly and often there is no return on investment because the impact is yet to be realised. It is also not effective because it is treated like a once off event with insignificant influence. The researcher argues that it is more like a “talk shop” with poor or no follow up and feedback (Waterhouse, 2015:48-49, Baccus, 2008:7-10; RIPAP, 2009:63-69).

4.1.4.4 Sectoral Parliaments

Sectoral Parliaments were introduced to the public from all walks of life to ensure their participation in the workings of Parliament. They generally consist of, but are not limited to, three types of institutional events: Women's Parliament, Youth Parliament and People's Assembly (The Parliamentarian, 2013:10). These may take different forms including mock Parliament, roundtable discussions or any other form that Parliament may determine. They are held in different provinces but mostly in Parliament (Waterhouse, 2015:48-49).

Participants are invited from all the provinces where they meet at a central place, for two days to deliberate on issues affecting them. MPs and cabinet members from different committees and departments related to the topics also take part in the deliberations. The programme includes commissions to discuss thematic areas identified. Each commission prepares a report, which will be presented and debated in the mock parliamentary debate. The reports are then adopted and presented to Parliament (Baccus, 2008:10; Waterhouse, 2015:49; Scott, 2009:81). The impact of these Parliament is still to be determined because the reports are shelved, there are no follow ups, the following year another group of women or youth group gather again under the same roof to produce another report which will end up on the shelves.

4.1.4.5 Petitions

Section 17 of the Constitution (1996) guarantees the right of everyone to present petitions. According to PPF (2013:42), "a petition is a written request, complaint, or representation addressed to the institution by an individual or group after having exhausted other avenues". Section 118(1) (d) of the Constitution (1996) empowers any Parliamentary Committee while section 56(d) and 69(d) further provide for NA and NCOP to receive petitions and representations from any interested persons or institutions (RSA Constitution, 1996). Although there is a Petitions Framework, the researcher argues that most people are not aware of petitions, especially in the rural communities. There is also a lack of knowledge on how to write petitions, particularly amongst citizens who have poor literacy levels and do not have resources and are not familiar with the procedures of presenting petitions (Waterhouse, 2015:49; Baccus, 2008:7-10; RIPAP, 2009:63).

4.1.4.6 Public Access to Committee Meetings

All committee meetings at Parliament are open to the public. Allowing the public access to the committee proceedings and house sittings is a constitutional right, which is an important aspect of public participation. This is also regarded as a traditional form of democratic participation, whereby the public has access to all sittings of the Houses as well as committee meetings. While there is access, it is important to make a distinction between "participation" and "observation" of the Parliamentary or committee activities that promote authentic public participation. This means that the public can attend meetings and sittings to observe and not participate unless they are specifically invited to address the committee on specific issues. As a consequence, attendance of these committees represents a very limited form of participation, as it relates mostly to information sharing (PPF, 2013:35; Baccus, 2008:10).

This according to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation is mere manipulation where the public has no power to influence a decision but a rubber stamp of the powerful. Pretty et al. (1994) refers to it as "passive participation" in which the public is not given an opportunity to make contributions before a decision is made and Oakley and Marsden (1984) regards it as an "anti-participatory mode", the public is simply not allowed to participate. For authentic and empowering public participation, Parliament needs to ensure that people are allowed to make inputs and their inputs are considered. All Parliament strategies discussed above are not in line with the Manila (1989) declarations and IAP's core values which allows for participants to (i) influence (ii) direct (iii) control and (vi) own the process.

4.1.4.7 Public Education and Access to Information

The PPF (2013:60) argues that, "Public education is utilised for the education of the public on their elected representatives and promoting the principle of open and accountable government in line with the Constitution (1996) and seeks to inform the public about the processes and developments within the Legislature and ways in which they can become involved through the various strategies". RIPAP (2009:64) agrees "members of the public will only participate "meaningfully" in parliamentary processes if they know of strategies through which they can participate and understand the structure and systems of Parliament". The primary responsibility of the Public

Education Office (PEO) is to promote public understanding of public participation opportunities and the work of Parliament. PEO must strengthen public participation by ensuring that the public understand the issues under discussion and strategies for public participation to allow authentic participation in the parliamentary processes (RIPAP, 2009:64, Scott, 2009:88).

The researcher is of the opinion that despite PEO's and its programmes, access to information is still a key challenge. For instance, information relating to the parliamentary schedule, bills under discussion in committees, public hearings and the like are not easily available and accessible. Parliamentary processes are generally not understood and are intimidating, making it difficult for public to participate in parliamentary processes (RIPAP, 2009:64).

4.1.4.8 Involving Civil Society in Oversight and Law-Making

This takes place through the oversight functions requiring public participation. These include the following:

- Annual Performance Plan (APP), where external input is required for independent verification.
- The Appropriation Bill/Departmental Vote by receiving submissions from professional bodies, Community Based Organisations and Non –Governmental Organisations to assist the committee in their engagements with the departments.
- Quarterly Reports to assist the committee to attain clarity on the state of implementation of a department's programmes.
- The Annual Report to assess whether government has achieved intended outcomes of service delivery.
- The Strategic Budget Review for outer years to provide some form of immediate external verification to evidence the department's delivery performance over the years (PPM, 2015:25-29)

4.1.4.9 Summary

The presented initiatives have the potential to improve citizens' access to parliament. However, there are challenges that are currently influencing their effectiveness. They

tend to be presented as once-off events, and there is no follow up on the issues raised between Parliament and the executive and with the citizens who participate through these. For the past year the majority of committees held public hearings on the bills before Parliament which shows the importance of this public participation strategy. The researcher's observation is that the public hearings are organised at a very short space of time which makes public education, mobilisation of relevant stakeholders and notices to the public difficult. This is evident in the quality of submissions made by member of the public. In most instances because of the short notices the turnout is poor and those who attend are not informed on the subject thereby making it difficult to make meaningful inputs.

Taking Parliament to The People is one of the costly programmes in the calendar of Parliament. This is because the sitting of Parliament is imitated in the rural areas where there is no infrastructure. Parliament must therefore hire all the necessary infrastructure for five days for up to ten thousand people. People make submissions and raise issues, however it's more like a "platform for complaints" and same issues are raised in all the provinces. This clearly indicates that the programme is not effective because if it was, Parliament would be more proactive and make sure that the issues that are raised are actually attended to nationally to avoid repetition.

Public access to committee meetings is the worst form of public participation because by attending a committee meeting does not equate to authentic and empowering public participation. It boils down to tokenism for Parliament to only tick the boxes that they have complied. This also applies to Sectoral Parliaments because once the report is produced, nothing is done with it.

The draft PPM strives to address the above issues by incorporating ensuring that there is proper follow up and feedback. The poor monitoring and follow-up on many of these initiatives poses a danger because poorly implemented participation processes, where there is no evidence of them affecting decisions, tend to deepen frustration, helplessness and mistrust in elected representatives (Waterhouse, 2015:48-49).

4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLGIES USAGE IN PARLIAMENT

4.2.1 Introduction

With the introduction of SMTs, Parliament is working towards an integrated approach to communication using multimedia; this means using more than one medium of communication especially interactive platforms. To achieve this, content should be platform specific because of the different target audience and the type of platform. The different platforms are discussed below.

4.2.2 Current Public Engagement through the Media

Currently Parliament engages citizens through different kinds of media both traditional and new. The traditional media used by Parliament includes print press (national, regional and community newspapers and magazines), radio (national, regional and community), and television (national, regional and community). According to Hansard Society (2009:02), television and radio remain the preferred medium by most citizens in the developed world to receive information and to keep in touch with events at large. However, this medium does not allow sufficient interactive or two-way interaction between the public and Parliament. It is one to many and not many to many which is one of the unique feature provided by SMTs (Parliament of RSA, 2015).

In 2011, Parliament introduced several SMTs to enhance the current media platforms used for public participation. It must be mentioned that this was a deliberate and pertinent effort to ensure that the introduction of SMTs does not replace the traditional media but complement it. This is important because Parliament engages with different audiences so there should be an appropriate mix of strategies and platforms. Parliament has four main SMT accounts: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, while Flickr, LinkedIn and Mxit are still being investigated (Parliament of RSA, 2016). The digital platforms include websites and mobi-sites, My Parliament APP and the intranet.

Facebook has gone beyond person-to-person interaction by allowing businesses and brands to engage with current and potential customers on an individual level. The Facebook account was the first to be introduced in Parliament in 2011. It has grown steadily since its introduction in Parliament, though its growth is slower when

compared to Twitter. Parliament posts information on its Facebook page mainly during special events like the State of the Nation Address. People are free to comment and also pose questions via the page for the chairpersons to respond. This however is difficult because there are no dedicated and trained resources to manage the account. Often the comments and queries from the public are “lost” in the system. MPs are also struggling to deal with queries posted via SMTs mainly because of lack of proper guidelines and training (Parliament of RSA, 2016). The Facebook URL is https://www.facebook.com/ParliamentofRSA (Parliament of RSA, 2016).

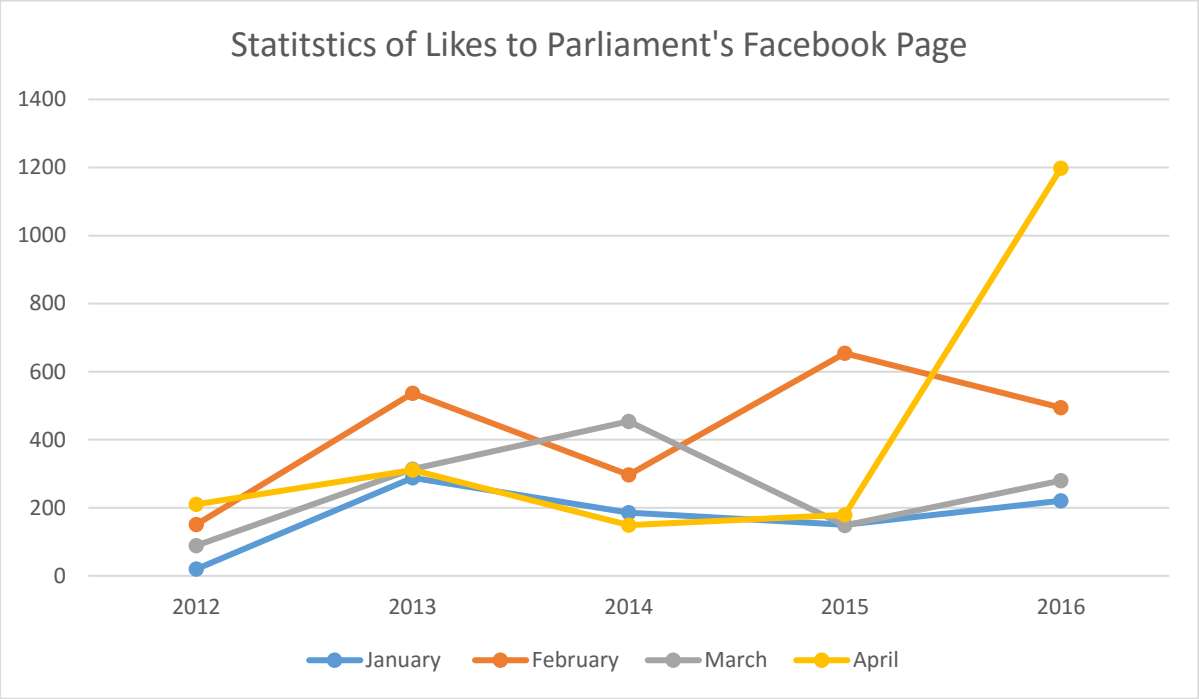


Figure 4.3: Statistics of likes to Facebook of the Parliament of RSA

Source: Parliament of RSA 2017

Twitter is a powerful medium because it is an open software platform, which means that it allows its data to be used by anyone for research, third party development and integration. The open and public nature of the platform gives businesses and organisations access to consumer or public insights when compared to Facebook. Parliament’s focus on Twitter has been threefold: educative, interactive and informative. The advantages of having a Twitter account in Parliament is that it assists with the monitoring of conversations and keywords that relate to Parliament, so that problems and negative sentiments can be addressed before they escalate. The other advantage is instant feedback (Parliament of RSA, 2015).

Content on the Parliament Twitter account includes a summary of news featured on the Parliament website, links to other Parliament SMTs content and coverage of special Parliamentary events. The account aims at promoting the work of Parliament to the increasing number of South African citizens engaging with politics on Twitter. Parliament's Twitter Handle is @ParliamentofRSA. Currently, the Twitter page is showing more growth than the Facebook page.

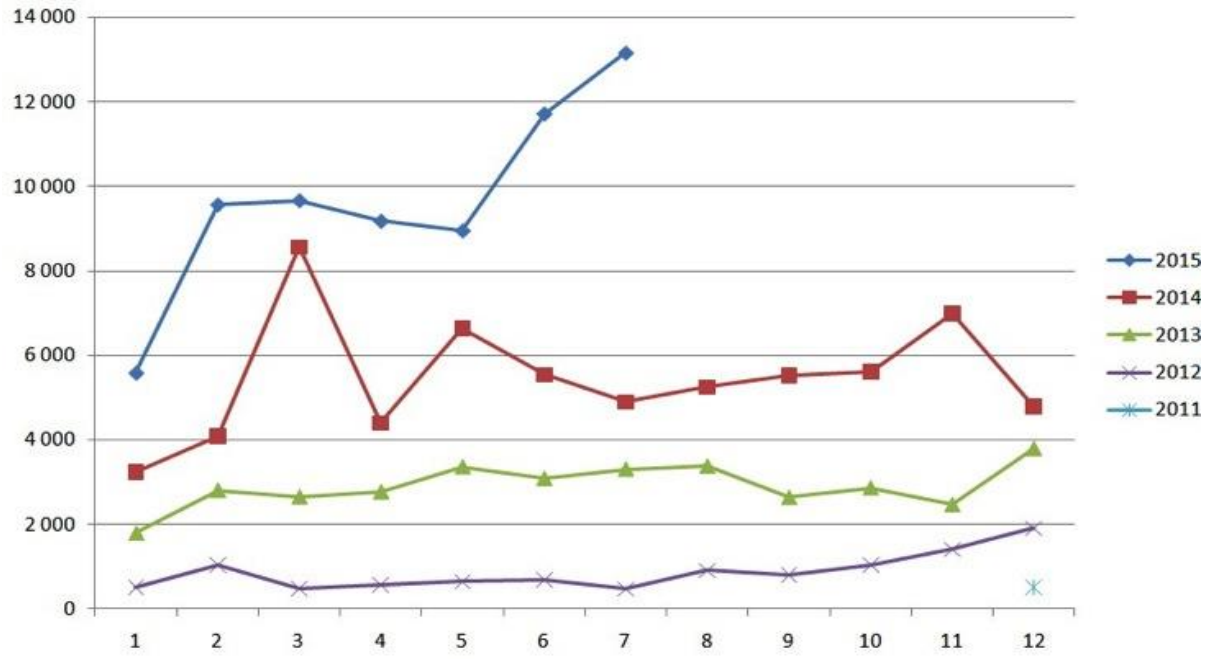


Figure 4.4: Statistics of Twitter page of the Parliament of RSA

Source: Parliament of RSA 2017

Parliament is slowly but surely taking advantage of the immediacy of SMTs in committee meetings. For example, during the public hearings on the Cost to communicate held recently by the Portfolio Committee on Telecommunications and Postal Services, one MP received a question via Twitter during the meeting, which was broadcast live on the Parliamentary channel to pose to Telkom representatives during their presentations. The representatives were able to respond to the question immediately. In this way, the viewer was able to pose his/her question via their representative using technology to participate in the hearings and receive feedback immediately (Live broadcast of PC on Telecommunications and Postal Services, 21 September 2016 at 17:35). Parliament should therefore learn from this experience and build on it. This also demonstrated the cross-platform potential and the immediacy of

SMTs. Despite the steady growth, same challenges faced by Facebook are experienced with the Twitter account; there are no resources to support the account.

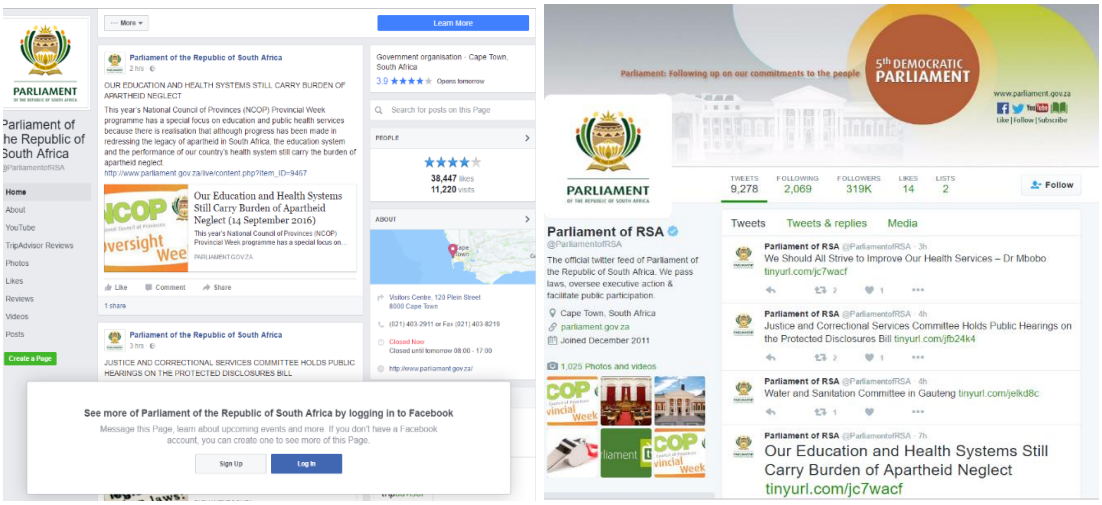


Figure 4.5: Facebook and Twitter Pages of the Parliament of RSA

Source: Parliament of RSA Website (2016)

With the success of Facebook and Twitter, Parliament introduced a YouTube channel in 2013 and, lastly, an Instagram account in 2016. The YouTube account has 12 465 subscribers with a high average of approximately 350 000 and low average of 25 000 views per month. Instagram has 46 posts, 281 followers and 61 following (Parliament of RSA Website, 2016). These are small numbers when compared to the number of citizens in the country and the number of people with access to internet and smartphones. Currently, only NA and NCOP sittings are streamed live, and then archived for later viewing. Committee meetings are not streamed on YouTube due to lack of capacity, and only special committees, such as the Ad-hoc committee on the appointment of the Public Protector are given special preference. Special sittings such as Taking Parliament to the People, which are held outside Parliament precincts, are also published live on YouTube. MPs and the public can subscribe to the channel, and receive notifications when sittings are published (Parliament of RSA, 2016).

This channel complements the Parliamentary TV channel because the public can follow the one House on the YouTube channel and the other on television. The YouTube channel can be found at www.YouTube.com/ParliamentofRSA (Parliament of RSA Website, 2016). The researcher believes that the Parliament YouTube channel is one of the most popular channels in the country, however Parliament is not taking

advantage of that to ensure that the interest in the channel grows and not decrease. There is also lack of capacity to support this platform.

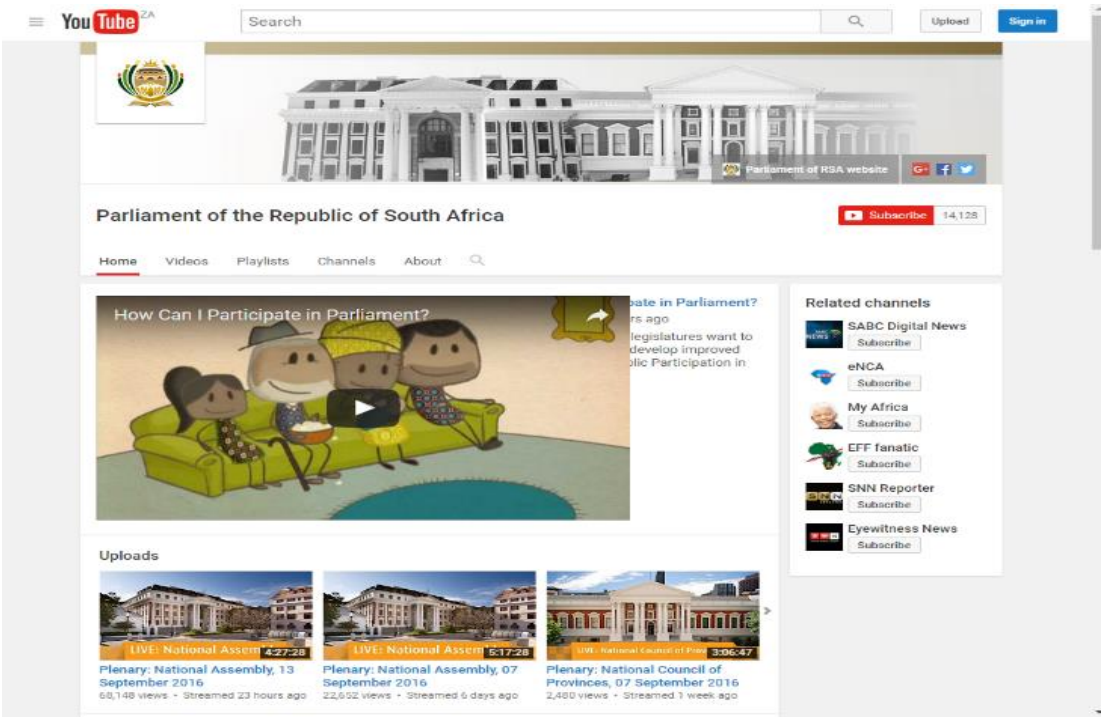


Figure 4.6: YouTube Page of Parliament of RSA

Source: Parliament of RSA Website (2016)

The Parliament website is the default home for all Parliament web content. Parliament also publishes all the information gathered on Parliament, especially of the Committees, on the website in the form of press statements or latest news and stories from the field. The website is the single most important content/document-publishing platform. It is key to linking Parliament with the media, public and civil society. The home page is significant for navigation and quick access to Parliamentary information and a tab structure has been introduced to enhance navigability. All the other SMTs are published on the website, which makes it easier to access them. For example, if a site visitor does not know the YouTube page of Parliament they can click on the YouTube icon to navigate to the page.

Figure 4.7: Parliament's Website Page

Source: Parliament of RSA 2015

During the world e-Parliament in 2014, Hon. Frolick in IPU (2014:55) reported that while MPs make use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, to stimulate the debate by posting topics on the website or responding to the opinions expressed by the public, there are challenges hindering the effective use of these platforms. These includes: inability to respond promptly to citizens inquiries, creating a user friendly and up to date website, managing the risk of inappropriate information on the political scene, broadband speed and computer literacy, differentiating between strong lobby groups with international appeal and local citizens when interacting on the website, improving protection and online security, and using different media to ensure responsiveness through contact with the whole electorate (IPU, 2016:68). To encourage MPs to take advantage of SMTs chairpersons of Portfolio and Select Committees were trained on the use of SMTs and assisted them to open SMT accounts for them to engage and respond to public queries on matters related to their committees using this medium.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers use different methods during studies to ensure that a systematic process is employed to allow scholars to identify, extract and analyse data, report results and make recommendations. Results can be reliable or unreliable, valid or invalid depending on the methods used.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:55), a research design "serves as a plan or "blueprint" of how research will be conducted". It is the proposal by the researcher on how the hypotheses will be tested and how to establish a relationship between the independent and dependent variable with a high degree of certainty (Webb and Auriacombe, 2006:589; Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee,2006:93). A research design can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative according to Welman, et al. (2011:08-09) emphasises the processes and meanings that are not examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency". It is a method used to gather and present information in the form of words rather than numbers.

Qualitative research methods aim at establishing the socially constructed nature of reality, to stress the relationship between the researcher and the object of the study, as well as to emphasise the value-laden nature of the enquiry (McMillan and Schumacher ,2010:11). This method allows researchers to study human actions from the insiders' perspective, with the goal to understand rather than an explain human behaviour (Mouton, 2001:49). This is achieved by having conversations with subjects or subjectively observing behaviour (Welman, et al. (2011:09). A qualitative research design will be employed for this study. This will require the researcher to have direct contact with the respondents to gather information on their views on the question. As a qualitative research approach can be time consuming and may need many resources, it is important for the researcher to keep a sample to a manageable size and flexibility to rearrange things if necessary to suit the requirements of the study (Schurink,2009:803). The researcher kept the sample as small as possible to ensure

there is in-depth information collected from the respondents. The Population and sampling for this study is discussed in the next section.

5.2.1 Population and Sampling

Once the research design is determined a researcher needs to determine the population of the study as the research problem relates to a specific population. In other words, the researcher needs to identify the population in which the study is to be undertaken. Welman, et al. (2011:52) indicate that population is “the study of object and consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events or the conditions to which they are exposed”. It is a collection of elements or all the units of analysis from which a sample has been taken in which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:174, Welman, et al. 2011:52). The unit of analysis, according to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:72), is “the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data”. The population of this study is the Parliament of RSA and the unit of analysis is all the divisions dealing with public participation.

The sample is derived from the population and it consists of the people or objects the researcher wishes to study (Welman, et al. 2011:56). Cooper and Schindler (2006:72) define a sample as “a part of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population”. Babbie (2005:104), on the other hand, describes a sample as “what or who is being studied” or a subset of the population. There are two types of sampling methods, i.e. probability and non-probability sampling. The researcher can choose to use probability sampling where there is a probability that a member or element of a population will be included in the sample or non-probability sampling where this probability cannot be specified (Welman, et al. 2011:56). For this qualitative study, a non-probability sampling method was used in which purposive sampling was employed to collect data.

According to Babbie (2005:204), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling, in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher’s judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative. It allows researchers to rely on their experience, ingenuity, or previous research findings

(Welman, et al. 2011:69). Denscombe (2010:17) maintains that “purposive sampling is applied to those situations where the researcher already knows about something, about specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones who are likely to produce the most valuable data”. The unit of analysis for this research is the officials responsible for public participation (Parliamentary Democratic Offices (PDOs), NA and NCOP, and committees) and those responsible for SMTs (PCS and ICT) in Parliament. The use of purposive sampling requires the researcher to be thorough in choosing the participants that are readily available but also must meet the requirements of the study (Hoyle, Harris and Judd ,2002:187). This is important because availability and relevance of the respondents is critical to the study’s success as these could compromise the reliability and validity of the results.

5.2.2 Data Collection Instruments and Approach

Dempsey and Dempsey (1992:72) describe data as raw material from which all research reports are generated. Such data may be collected using quantitative or qualitative methods. The researcher used a combination of methods that are mainly theoretical and analytical to comprehend the aim of this study. Babbie and Mouton (2001:282-283) emphasise the need for triangulation or the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to achieve replication and convergence for the findings to be reliable. Guion, et al. (2011:1) concur by maintaining that the purpose of triangulation is to determine validity by subjecting a research question to a multi-perspective analysis. The theoretical review of literature included public participation and SMTs within parliaments. The literature sources assisted the researcher to develop a good understanding of, and insight into, previous research. A distinction can be made between primary and secondary information sources. The two main methods of data collection for this study are the use of interviews (primary sources) and documents analysis(secondary resources).

5.2.2.1 Document Analysis

According to Mouton (2001:99), documentary sources are textually based and are available in electronic and physical format. This study mainly relied on written sources of data, where data collection of literature sources was done through library and web searches. Electronic journal articles, textbooks, internet sources, research reports and

legislation relating to public participation and SMTs were also analysed. The researcher had access to internal documents on the subject matter, namely, the public participation draft model, the strategic plan of Parliament. Documents were analysed in order to understand the conceptions, forms and nature of public participation in the law-making process in Parliament. Analysis of these documents assisted the researcher to understand the topic better after visiting the websites and sourcing documents and materials on best practices about public participation and the current use of SMTs internationally and regionally, specifically in parliaments. The study also used other research and theses that have investigated public participation and the use of SMTs to enhance public participation

According to Denscombe (2010:220), “Researchers should check in advance whether their access to documentary data sources will need authorization or require payment”. For this research there was no need to request permission to use any documents as all documents used are in the public domain.

5.2.2.2 Interviews

Gillham (2000:03) describes an interview as a conversation, usually between two people, in which one person (the interviewer) seeks responses for a particular purpose from the other person (the interviewee). Theron and Saunders (2009:180) state that interviews provide an opportunity for the researcher to “probe more deeply” the questions posed to the interviewee. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:80) believe that the interview allows the interviewer and interviewee to talk about the focus of the study, and it also leads to a discussion of thought and perceptions. Interviews are used to gain insights into people’s thoughts, feelings, emotions and experiences during a study (Denscombe, 2010:173-174). Researchers use interviews because they are the most appropriate method / approach used to ask for asking questions that cannot be structured into a multiple-choice format (Gay, 1987:203).

In-depth interviews were conducted through a semi-structured interview method, which allowed the researcher to explore the views of a sample comprising of senior managers responsible for public participation and SMTs in parliament (see Appendix 5). Denscombe (2010:175) describes semi-structured interviews as having “a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered”, however there should be some flexibility in terms of the order of topics to be discussed and to allow the

respondents to speak more widely on the issues raised. It allows respondents to give open-ended answers and to elaborate on points of interest. The researcher used the interview as the main method for data collection to supplement the literature study. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis as this method is easy to arrange, easy to control, and allows the researchers to locate specific ideas with specific people as the opinions and view expressed come from one source and also makes it easier for the researcher to transcribe the interview (Denscombe, 2010:176).

Interviews should be conducted in a private setting with one respondent at a time for them to feel free to express themselves fully and truthfully. Gay (1987:209) maintains that the qualitative research approach involves intensive data collection on many variables over an extended period in a natural setting. He further clarifies that "natural setting" means that variables being investigated are studied where they naturally happen. It is therefore important that the location secured for the interviews have no disturbances, ensures privacy and has fairly good acoustics (Denscombe, 2010:173-174). Interviews were therefore conducted in the respondents' offices to allow them privacy and to make them feel comfortable in the familiar environment. Semi-structured interviews are also flexible, since interviewers can adapt the situation to each subject. The reason why interviews were employed as a method to collect data is because in many instances they produce more accurate and honest responses since the interviewer can explain and clarify both the purpose of the research and individual questions. Conducting interviews offers particular advantages, such as having high construct validity, in-depth insights, have low refusal rates and promote "ownership" of findings, as well as establishing rapport with research subjects (Mouton, 2011:142). On the other hand, interviews have limitations; such as the lack of generalisation of results and non-standardisation of measurement while data collection and analysis which are time consuming (Mouton, 2011:148).

Interviews were used to gain an understanding from the respondents as to how public participation is carried out in Parliament and the weaknesses or challenges of the strategies employed, if any. The other purpose for conducting interviews was to understand how SMTs are used in Parliament in an effort to engage citizens.

The interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes to 1 hour, as Denscombe (2010:182) correctly points out that it is important to have a fixed time for an interview, as "it is

unlikely that busy people will feel comfortable with a suggestion that the interview will take as long as it takes". As relying on memory alone is not adequate during interviews because it is prone to partial recall, bias and error, the researcher used field notes to capture the discussion between researcher and respondents. Field notes, according to Welman, et al. (2011:199), can be described as detailed notes and observations that the researcher makes by hand, tape recording and observations, and are compiled during the interview. They can be referred to in future to refresh memory and they are regarded as a permanent record of the discussion during the interview (Denscombe, 2010:187). It is important for field notes to be captured during or immediately after the interview while events are fresh in the mind of the interviewer. Interviews were also digitally recorded as a backup for written field notes. The audio recording provides more permanent and accurate recordings even though non-verbal communication cannot be recorded (Denscombe, 2010:187). The researcher sought permission from the respondents to record the interview session before they began with the session (See Appendix 2). As Powell (1997:154) puts it, "the purpose of qualitative research is to understand rather than to predict". This study seeks to understand how SMTs can be used to enhance public participation in the law-making process in Parliament. The limitation of this method is that it is time consuming and it can be difficult to schedule interviews with respondents due to their tight work schedule.

5.2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Once data collection and checking have been completed, the researcher should begin with the process of analysing data. This is an important step because analysis and interpretation of data form the basis of conclusions and recommendations and they also influence whether or not the recommendations will be implemented (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:93; Du Plooy, 2002:93). According to Creswell (2008:190), data analysis in qualitative research is "a process of categorisation, description and synthesis." Data analysis assists the researcher to detect consistent data within the data, such as consistent co-variance of two or more variables. Welman, et al. (2011:211) agree by stating that data analysis helps the researcher to investigate the variable, their effect, relationship and patterns of involvement within our world.

According to Babbie (2005:443) data analysis is the representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomenon that those observations reflect. Denscombe (2010:235) concurs, stating that the purpose of analysing something is to gain a better understanding of it. He further states that through a detailed examination of the object that is being studied the aim is either to describe its constituent elements, to explain how it works or to interpret what it means.

To analyse data, the study used qualitative data analytical techniques. These are based on statements by Powell (1997:154) that, “the purpose of qualitative research is to understand rather than to predict”. The researcher transcribed the interviews before they were analysed. Interviews were transcribed and analysed for recurring themes using open coding which involves labelling chunks of data in terms of their content, axial coding (which involves relationships, links and associations between codes and grouping them under sub-headings) and selective coding, which focuses mainly on core codes. This allowed the researcher to arrive at concepts that can help explain the phenomenon and will form a cornerstone for generation of theories that account things and explain why these things happen the way they do (Denscombe, 2010:115).

The grounded theory approach was used to analyse data. This approach, according to Denscombe (2010:115), involves coding and categorisation of the raw data. It also provides a well-recognised, authoritative rationale for the adoption of an approach that does not necessarily involve statistical analysis, quantitative data or the quest for representative samples. It is also linked with qualitative research, which focuses on small-scale studies, and research focusing on human interactions in specific settings (Denscombe, 2010:109). Following this was data interpretation, which has to do with the synthesis of data with a view to reach meaningful conclusions (Mouton, 2001:109). The data was firstly coded in the form of alphabets, names and surnames, and these codes were then grouped into one of ten categories. Themes were then created based on the data collected, relationships, links and association from the codes and the categories created. De Vos (1998:343) refers to the series of steps involved in data analysis as Tesch’s Approach, whereby similar topics that emerge from the transcription are clustered together and arranged into categories. Category formation, according to De Vos, et al. (2005:337) represents the heart of qualitative data analysis.

The process of analysing and interpreting data, according to Denscombe (2010:292), involves a series of four tasks. That is, coding, categorising, identification of the themes, as well as the generalisation of conclusions based on the patterns and themes that have been identified. The researcher then employed the constant comparative method, which, according to Denscombe (2010:116), uses the following method: “the researcher can never lose sight of the data, or move the analysis too far away from what is happening on the ground. It ensures that any theory developed by the research remains closely in touch with its origins in the data. This, of course, is of vital importance to the whole approach”.

5.2.4 Ethical Consideration

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) mention that within certain disciplines, such as social sciences, education, criminology, medicine and similar areas of study, the use of human subjects in research is, of course, quite common. Whenever human beings are the focus of an investigation, a close look must be taken at the ethical implications of what is intended for the study. Mouton (2001:239) describes research ethics as the moral commitment that scientists are required to make to the search for truth and knowledge, which is referred to as “epistemic imperative”. He further maintains that the idea of an imperative implies that a kind of moral contract has been entered into and it is neither optional nor negotiable, but intrinsic to all scientific inquiry.

The researcher adhered to research ethics as outlined by Welman, et al. (2011:201) and Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:93). These authors talk about informed consent, that the researcher should obtain the necessary permission from the respondents after they are informed thoroughly and truthfully about the purpose of the interview and investigation. This should be followed by a signed consent form by the respondents. For this study, the researcher sought permission from the Secretary to Parliament to conduct the study and to interview individuals relevant to the study (See Appendix 2). The researcher also requested permission from the respondents to participate in this study; firstly, by formally requesting their participation through an email and, once agreed, the consent form was signed before the interview commenced (Appendix 3). Great care was taken to explain the purpose of the research and its benefits in future to the respondents.

The respondents were assured of their right to privacy by informing them that their identity would remain anonymous even when the data is analysed, interpreted and when recommendations are made. Confidentiality is one of the important ethical considerations and it is linked to anonymity. The respondents were assured that the information shared with the researcher during the interview would be protected and kept in a secure place at all times. The researcher also informed the respondents of their right to discontinue their participation in the study at any time should they wish to do so, without explaining themselves to the researcher. It was also explained to them that their withdrawal from the study would not disadvantage them in future. The respondents were given assurance that by participating in this study they would be indemnified against any physical or emotional harm, as the study itself is not harmful to humans in any manner.

Lastly, the researcher was also on guard not to manipulate the respondents or treat them as objects or numbers rather than human beings. The researcher achieved this by being open with the respondents and the semi-structured interviews allowed them to add information, as the answers were open ended.

5.3 POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is likely have practical and functional significance. The results of the study may add to the existing body of knowledge in the field of public policy studies, media studies and ICT studies, especially towards enhancing public participation levels in the law-making process. This may assist Parliament to put together an SMT strategy to enhance public participation with these new and fast growing media.

CHAPTER 6: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1.1 Constitutional Mandate

The adoption of the Constitution in 1996 dramatically transformed the nature and focus of public participation in South Africa. The Constitution (1996) states in the preamble that its purpose is to "Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people". It promises the public a commitment to an open and democratic form of governance. It regards public participation as a key constitutional principle. The Constitution (1996) states, "People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making. Institutions, both public and private, which are in partnerships with the government, are constitutionally bound to practise public participation in policy-making and implementation" (Constitution, 1996). This implies that decisions taken by government, a public entity or the private sector without public engagement are unconstitutional and can be declared illegal.

The Constitution (1996) contains a number of sections that deal directly with the principle of public participation, enjoining both Houses of Parliament with the responsibility of facilitating public participation (Buccus, 2008:06-07). Section 59(1) of the Constitution (1996) stipulates that "the NA must facilitate public involvement in the legislative processes of the Assembly and its Committees, while Section 70(b) provides that NCOP must facilitate public involvement. Section 59(2) provides that Parliament may not exclude the public and media in their proceedings unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society." However, this does not guarantee that people will either use or be able to exercise their right to participate in the legislative process (RSA Constitution, 1996; Waterhouse, 2015:4; Mphahlele, 2013:34; Muntingh, 2012:39; Baccus, 2008:07).

6.1.2 Selected Relevant legislation

6.1.2.1 The Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act 4 of 2004

The Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act 4 of 2004 provides a legislative framework for the functioning of the legislatures. The Act deals with issues such as the independence and immunities of members, disciplinary action against members, the management of the precinct of Parliament and broadcasting of the proceedings of Parliament. It does not provide for the needed direction in terms of the functioning of Parliament, public access and participation; this direction is mostly provided through the Rules of Parliament, which will be discussed in more detail later (Parliament of RSA, 2009:08-10; Waterhouse, 2015:13).

The Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act. No. 9 of 2009 (Money Bills Act) is significant because it provides for stronger direction to Parliament in terms of its constitutional role of oversight over the executive. Its focus is on the role of Parliament in decisions on how public funds are used and seeks to enhance the systems of Parliamentary oversight over executive decisions relating to financial planning, budgeting and spending (Waterhouse, 2015:13).

6.1.2.2 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, No. 3 of 2000 (PAJA)

PAJA is one of the statutes that legislate public participation in policy decision-making. The principles of PAJA emphasise that administrative decisions should be procedurally fair (Kleyn & Viljoen, 2010:98). Theron, Ceasar and Davids (2007:02) denote that public participation strategies have two main gains for a democratic policy-making process; namely, participation leads to better policy outcomes, and participation assists the public to develop the capacity for improving their own lives. Public participation paves the way for policy implementation to run smoothly and fosters a sense of ownership, eliminates resistance, and boosts commitment to the outcomes of the process (Clapper, 1996:76).

6.1.3 Policies

6.1.3.1 Rules of the National Assembly

The Constitution (1996) empowers the NA, NCOP to make rules regarding their procedures (Muntingh, 2012:35; Waterhouse, 2015:17; Constitution, 1996). The NA and NCOP have developed rules, which were last amended in 2014 for NA and 2008 for NCOP. For this study, the focus will be on the NA rules dealing with openness, public access, and public participation.

Chapter four of the NA rules deals with a general rule that stipulates that proceedings in the NA should be conducted in public, while part five deals in more detail with public access to proceedings in the House and certain committees. Chapter 12 focuses on rules relating to the committee system. Rule 152 reiterates the provisions of the Constitution (1996) in that the meetings of committees must be open to the public and the media. It then provides a number of reasons on which exception can be made for the exclusions of the public and the media (RSA Parliament, 2015).

Public participation in the work of committees is covered in rule 138, which deals with "general powers of the committee". This rule gives committees the power to summon people to appear before them to give evidence or produce documents, to receive submissions from interested persons or institutions; to conduct public hearings; and to permit oral submissions. The rules dealing with public participation in the Standing Committee on Finance and Appropriation are clear that public participation is significant. These rules, which were added in 2011, require that: "The committee must ensure public involvement in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, 2009." This gives effect to sections in that Act that require Parliament's rules to include public hearings on the development of annual fiscal framework and revenue proposals.

Chapter 13 deals with participation in relation to law reform processes, which deals with legislative processes. According to this rule, notice of the introduction of draft legislation and summaries should be published in the Government Gazette. Public invitation to submit written submissions within the stipulated timeframes should form part of the public notice of the bill. Finally, once a bill has been published for public comment, the Rules require that the relevant committee must "arrange its business in

such a manner that interested persons and institutions have an opportunity to comment on the bill". The actual timeframes are not specified.

6.1.3.2 Public Participation Framework

The legislative sector developed a PPF in 2013 to set the minimum universal standards, guidelines and nature of public participation within the sector. The goal of the PPF is to seek ways of achieving public participation to deepen democracy. Objectives of the framework are to obtain the public's views on policy, legislation and other processes; to share knowledge with communities regarding governance issues in order to improve the pace and relevance of service delivery; and to obtain information from people regarding their experiences of service delivery so that government institutions may take action to bring about change (PPF, 2013; Waterhouse, 2015:15).

The core values and principles of the PPF emphasise people's input in the design of participation opportunities; and communication to people on how their input affects decisions, which includes the various perspectives that were raised on an issue. Most encouraging is the value that the participation processes holds "the promise that the public's contribution will influence decision making" as dictated by IAP2 core values and the commitment made by 1989 Manila Declarations that the people themselves know what is best for them and what will bring about positive change in their lives. (PPF, 2013:31, Manila Declaration, 1989).

Notably, the PPF requires that in most cases people have input into the agenda of the participation process, and that committees produce reports on the processes within three weeks and provide feedback to stakeholders on the processes. In the section dealing with public hearings, the PPF requires a five-week notice period. Finally, throughout the PPF some direction is provided as to the means of notification, whereby it recommends the use of social media for notification. As with most well-articulated state documents, the PPF is not binding, it states that it provides a guideline, while also claiming to set minimum requirements (PPF, 2013:41-43; Waterhouse, 2015:15).

6.1.3.3 Public Participation Model of Parliament

Parliament has various public participation strategies in place. However, there have been no norms and standards to regulate the implementation of these. Subsequent to the Legislative Sector Public Participation Framework (2013), which was adopted by the Speaker's forum, Parliament and all legislatures were required to develop their own public participation models. Parliament therefore embarked on developing its own model that seeks to outline and mainstream norms and standards for public participation processes in Parliament. Parliament thus seeks to increase access and improve the quality of participation through enhanced programmes to ensure participatory democracy by implementing the PPM by 2019. This Model will be interlinked with the Oversight and Accountability Model and serve as one of the critical pillars of the Oversight and Accountability Model of Parliament. The model was discussed in in previous chapters (PPM, 2015:14).

6.1.3.4 Oversight Model of the South African Legislative Sector

The SOM was developed subsequent to the Oversight and Accountability Model of 2009, and is effectively a more detailed version of that document that applies not only to Parliament but also to all of the legislatures. It also provides a more detailed version of what is required in the Money Bills Act. No. 9 of 2009, in that it attempts to clarify what is meant by oversight and accountability and through this aims to provide information to assist committees in their analysis and debates related to oversight. It sets out guidelines for committees regarding the processes relating to their engagement with Appropriation Bills and Departmental Votes, quarterly and annual reports, strategic budget reviews, and oversight visits and intervention studies. The SOM emphasises public participation at each stage of the process requiring "constant enlistment of external information input for independent verification". The requirements for public participation in the oversight over quarterly and annual reports, strategic plans and budgets are unrealistic given the timeframes within which these must be finalised (Parliament of RSA, 2009:37-38).

6.2 LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK ON SOCIAL MEDIA TECHOLOGIES

6.2.1 Constitutional Mandate

In South Africa there is currently no law governing SMTs specifically, however some statutes and common law could assist to regulate the use of SMTs. The Constitution (1996) remains the supreme law, which guides other laws that will be discussed below to govern SMTs. In the absence of legislation dealing explicitly with SMTs there are few legislations that could be applied to cases relating to the use of SMTs as mandated by the Constitution (1996). All of these are discussed below.

6.2.2 Legislation

6.2.2.1 The Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), No. 2 of 2000

The Promotion of Access to Information Act (2002) enables the constitutional right of access to any information held by the state and any information that is held by another person and is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. This Act is in response to the constitutional mandate in terms of Chapter 2, Section 32(2) that provides for this legislation to be enacted. PAIA Act (RSA, 2000) allows anyone a right to request information from a public or private body. The right to information is limited to the extent that the information held by a public or private body is reasonably and justifiably restricted in an open and democratic society. The right to information is limited to the reasonable measures the state may impose to limit the administrative and financial burden the state might bear to giving effect to the PAIA Act (RSA, 2000:02; Jantjies, 2010:48).

6.2.2.2 Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, No. 25 of 2002 (ECT Act)

The ECT Act (2002) deals with any form of electronic communication, such as the facilitation of electronic transactions, e-government services, cryptography and authentication service providers, consumer protection and protection of personal information. The Act outlines the national strategy to provide for ways of maximising the benefits of electronic transactions to historically disadvantaged persons and communities. It also focuses on the prevention of information systems abuse (Mujinga, 2013:54; Jantjies, 2010:48).

6.2.2.3 Electronic Communications Act, No. 36 of 2005

This Act replaced the Telecommunications Act (No. 103 of 1996). It includes the regulation of telecommunication activities (excluding broadcasting) as well as the control of the radio frequency spectrum. The Act recommends that an independent South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and a Universal Service Agency of South Africa be created. The Electronic Communications Act No. 36 of 2005, amongst others, makes a new provision for the regulation of electronic communications services, electronic communications network services and broadcasting services (RSA Government, 1996).

The purpose of the Act is to transform the telecommunications industry in SA by promoting and facilitating the convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting, ICT and other services intended in this Act. This Act also aims at promoting and facilitating the development of interoperable and interconnected electronic networks, the provision of the services envisaged in the Act, and to create a technologically neutral licensing framework. It furthermore aims to promote the universal provision of electronic communications networks, electronic communications services and connectivity for everybody (RSA Government, 2005:20; Jantlies, 2010:49-50).

6.2.2.4 Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013

This Bill (POPI) aims to regulate the collection and processing of personal information by both private and public bodies, including the state. POPI redefines personal information as any information relating to an identifiable natural person, such as race, sex, name, identity number, views and opinions. The Bill sets out eight principles for the processing of personal information – namely, accountability, processing limitation, purpose specification, further processing limitations, information quality, openness, security safeguards and data subject participation. The Bill regulates the transfer of personal information to parties outside South Africa, as it requires personal information to be transferred to a party in a foreign jurisdiction where the information will enjoy similar protection to that afforded in terms of the Bill. This Bill also set out the universally accepted data protection principles, which describe how personal data may be collected and used (Mujinga, 2013:54).

6.2.3 Policies

6.2.3.1 Draft Online Regulation Policy

The objective of this policy is to create a regulatory classification and compliance monitoring framework, giving effect to sections 18(1) and (2) of the Films and Publications Act 65 of 1996 as amended by enabling effective regulation and speedy classification of digital content by the Board, and to create an opportunity for co-regulation between the Board and the industry for the classification of digital content distributed on mobile and digital platforms. It is against this background that the policy seeks to create and enhance cooperation between the Board and the industry to ensure uniform classification, labeling and compliance monitoring of digitally distributed content (RSA, 2015:08-09).

6.3 SUMMARY

Public participation in South Africa is well regulated, starting from the Constitution (1996), which mandates Parliament to ensure that public participation is facilitated in the law-making processes and other proceedings of Parliament. In response to their constitutional mandate and the lessons from the constitutional court cases, Parliament adopted several strategies to ensure that public participation is conducted properly. All these will be guided by the draft PPM to be adopted by Parliament. Despite regulations Parliament is still not conducting public participation as expected. This is evident by a number of court cases challenging Parliament on the Bills that were passed without conducting proper public participation as mandated by the Constitution (1996). Because of the powerful nature of SMTs, t is important to develop laws that protect the personality rights of individuals. These laws will empower public to understand the difference between freedom of expression and defamation, as most individuals still believe they can post whatever they wish on their social pages without any legal recourse as they regard them as private. The South African courts are still struggling with issues arising out of SMTs usage, as SMTs are an underdeveloped area of law. However, this is not altogether pessimistic as there are few legislations, such as the ones discussed in this chapter, which can assist in dealing with court cases regarding SMTs and, where necessary, refer to the relevant sections in the Constitution as the Supreme Law.

CHAPTER 7: UTILISING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: A CASE STUDY OF PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to consolidate the findings based on the research hypothesis. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the theories of public participation and the developing theories of SMTs for transparency and good governance. A body of literature was reviewed on public participation and SMTs to enhance good governance and democracy to give context to this study. An analysis of the current context of public participation and SMTs in the South African Parliament was conducted through interviews with key officials involved with public participation and SMTs.

7.2 METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

A combination of research techniques was used to collect data in this study. The methods used were interviews and document analysis, both hard and soft copies, and different books and journal reports were reviewed. The analysis included public participation strategies currently employed in Parliament to ensure public participation, the opportunities and challenges of these strategies, how SMTs are used and the challenges thereof. The draft PPM, which is soon to be launched, was also reviewed. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents for this study, which are the key officials, including senior managers responsible for public participation, and SMTs in Parliament. In-depth interviews, which took 40 to 60 minutes, were conducted in English broadly on public participation and the use of SMTs in Parliament. Audio recordings as well as note taking were used to document the interviews for easy and accurate reference. Guba and Lincon (1989, in Babbie and Mouton, 2001:275) refer to these as “extensive field notes”. Different questions, which were tied to the objectives, were posed to the respondents, and the findings are to follow.

The next section deals with the responses of the respondents interviewed and the information collected from the documents analysis guided by the research questions and objectives. The first part of the questions deals with current public participation in Parliament mainly to present an overview of status of public participation and the last part deals specifically with whether Parliament is leveraging on SMTs. The detailed interview guide is attached in Appendix 5.

7.3 RESEARCH RESPONSES

7.3.1 Research Question

What is the criterion for successful public participation?

How does Parliament engage the public in its processes of law- and decision-making?

Findings

These questions were partly dealt with during the literature review on public participation strategies in Parliament. Parliament engages and interacts with the citizens in several ways. These includes outreach programmes in celebration of significant days in the form of sectoral Parliaments, such as youth, women and children, disabled persons, as well as programmes such as People's Assembly, Taking Parliament to The People, NCOP Provincial Week, and committee oversights, amongst others. Parliament also employs public participation strategies, such as public hearings, which provide citizens with the platform for raising concerns and the opportunity to "influence" decisions that affect their lives. When there is legislation that is of public interest, the Bill is advertised on various media platforms to create awareness and the public is directed to the Committee Secretary of that particular committee for submissions. Submissions can be made through, email, telephone, post, website, SMTs or any other method that is convenient or comfortable.

Parliament has their hearings in the precincts or they visit the sector that is affected by that Bill. For example, if the PC on Land and Rural Development is dealing with the Bill on land and rural development they are likely to have their hearings in the rural

areas and farms as the people in the rural areas might not have the means to come to Parliament to make submissions.

The public also interacts with Parliament through presentations from stakeholders, such as NGOs, CBOs, organised formations, civil society and professional bodies. The topic of the Bill for public hearings determines the target audience. When a piece of legislation is discussed in the committee and public input is needed, the committee invites relevant civil society organisations interested in that particular legislation to make presentations. For example, if the Bill is dealing with matters relating to education, the committee invites the professional bodies dealing with education, such as academic institutions, to make presentations. The public can also make individual presentations to the committee and if their inputs are valuable, travelling arrangements are made by the committee for those individuals to come for presentations in Parliament. Buccus (2008:07) believes that this thinking reveals that the introduction of participatory or deliberative strategies to facilitate greater public participation in policy processes, thereby addressing the democratic 'deficit' and strengthening governance, requires authentic, transformative approaches that enable civil society stakeholders to "influence" decision-making. The public should also be empowered to direct, control and own policy-making.

The other strategy for public engagement usually used by Parliament are the use of petitions. There is a petitions office in parliament dealing specifically with petitions directed to Parliament. Petitions are properly regulated in Parliament through the Petitions Framework, however this strategy is not effective especially for people who have not attended formal schooling, mostly in rural areas as they are not aware of petitions and the process followed to petition Parliament. The public is also engaged through PDOs and PCOs which are intended to establish a meaningful and immediate Parliamentary presence in every province to sustain the interaction between the institution and the people. These offices roles are similar; the only difference is that PDOs are situated in relatively under-resourced areas (RIPAP, 2009:62-63).

Public education initiatives are also used to engage the public where the office is entrusted with the primary responsibility of promoting public understanding of public participation opportunities and the workings of Parliament. This office must underpin public participation, as individuals and organisations can only participate meaningfully

in Parliamentary processes when the issues under discussion and the strategies for participation are understood. Currently this is not the case as according to RIPAP (2009:64-65), participants indicated that Parliamentary processes are generally not understood and are intimidating. They also felt that information relating to the Parliamentary schedule, Bills under discussion in committees, public hearings and the like are not easily available and many participating organisations admitted that they were not sure how to access this information.

Analysis

The findings above show that Parliament is trying to reach citizens and "involve" them in the process of law-making as mandated by the Constitution (1996). Given the history of exclusion, it is critical for South African democracy that public participation is encouraged. This is to ensure open and transparent decision-making and accountability by providing a platform for citizens to raise their concerns and an opportunity to "influence" decisions affecting their lives. However, from the interviews, it appears that the public participation strategies employed by Parliament are not effective. The literature reviewed and the responses from the respondents confirm that Parliament's main focus is on "informing", "involving" and "consulting" the public as opposed to empowering the public in a meaningful way to allow them to direct, control and own the decision-making instead of them only "influencing" the decision.

Based on the history of public participation the challenges are structural and systematic. The challenges are structural because Parliament was historically an inward-looking institution and not open to the public. The focus was mostly on repealing apartheid laws and oversight on the executive to ensure service delivery. Even though public participation was introduced during the first term of the democratic Parliament, it took a back seat until recently. While Parliament is beginning to take public participation seriously, the lack of human and financial resources is another major hindrance for the success of public participation.

For instance, the restructuring of Parliament to accommodate the demands of the new democratic government, resources for public participation was not sufficiently considered. This leads to some parts of the country being neglected, due to insufficient budgets, for example, to reach all the provinces to conduct public hearings for all the Bills before Parliament. People in rural areas are the ones who suffer the most

because of their location. Scott (2009:77) concurs that “years after the advent of democracy the core function of public participation in the legislative sector was given recognition in the form of the budget to mobilise participation. This budget has grown substantially over the years yet remains insufficient to reach [the] population”. The budget is inadequate to make a real impact given the scope of public participation activities, population, poverty levels, the rate of illiteracy and geography in the form of the rural nature of most of the provinces (Scott, 2009:78).

The challenges are also systemic because Parliament does not have a public participation unit where all the public participation issues are centralised. Ideally, there should be a unit, which receives, analyse, process and forward the submissions to the relevant committee and House for further processing. Once processed, the unit should ensure that the public receive feedback on the issues raised. Currently, committee secretaries receive the submissions through the website, email, telephone or post. Submissions received through the website are not likely to be attended to because they are lost between the PCS and Committee Section due to a lack of proper coordination. Respondents from committees indicated that they are yet to receive inputs submitted via the website, while the respondents from PCS have indicated that the website is only used to create awareness and not to receive submissions. This demonstrates the disjuncture in these two divisions and also points to lack of coordination amongst stakeholders within Parliament, hence the problem of various pockets dealing with public participation issues differently. This eventually led to Parliament renegading on their Constitutional (1996) mandate of facilitating public participation in their processes.

Though Parliament’s website is an important resource for members of the public seeking information on the functioning of Parliament and strategies for public participation, a number of submissions to the Panel expressed frustration with Parliament’s website. It was felt that there is little information available through the website on, for example, reports, committee programmes and guidelines on making submissions to committees (RIPAP, 2009:65).

Most respondents are of the opinion that outreach programmes like Taking Parliament to the People and sectoral Parliaments are treated as events where people gather in either Parliament or Parliament goes to them to raise their concerns. Even though

there is a report produced at the end of these programmes there are no follow-ups or feedback sessions where the public is “informed” of the progress made on the issues raised. One respondent argued that having a gathering for five to ten thousand people for five consecutive days to raise their concerns does not translate to effective public participation, unless there is a tangible outcome that will change the lives of the people. This is because not all of the five thousand people will be given an opportunity to raise their concerns and therefore this might be misleading.

Scott (2009:83) supports this when she states, “the weakness of outreach initiatives is that they are usually mass-based events where the politicians are heard but the public have little opportunity to participate and give inputs pertaining to the specific topic to the event”. She further alludes to the point that there is a lack of an effective feedback mechanism to inform communities of the outcomes of such gatherings on decisions taken. Ben-Zeev (2012:22) concurs: “public representatives and parliamentary officials acknowledged that the legislatures need to improve their ability to give feedback”. Ben-Zeev (2012:22) further states that good feedback would help to build stronger relationships between citizens and their representatives, and would also ensure transparency in decision-making, because the government would have to show how it had reached its decisions. RIPAP (2009:65) supports this notion by stating, “It is essential that Parliament makes concrete efforts to provide individuals and organizations that participate in parliamentary processes with information regarding the impact of their submission and explain how these processes will ultimately result in tangible outputs. At the very least, receipt of written submissions should be acknowledged”. The above is strengthened by IAP’s core values.

PDOs were established to bring Parliament closer to the people. The first three offices started in Limpopo, Northwest and Northern Cape with the aim of expanding to all the remaining provinces. Almost ten years later this has not been expanded beyond the initial three provinces and therefore they are not reaching the majority of the people. They are also under resourced and inadequately equipped. It is therefore not effective because it only reaches a certain segment of society.

PCOs receive their funding from Parliament and provide a basis for MPs to carry out constituency work. These offices are often mistaken for political parties’ offices, therefore their objectivity and neutrality is often questioned. According to Hicks

(2003:03), “the constituency system is intended to address the considerable gap between communities and legislative structures through facilitating and channelling public input and concerns through their designated constituency member of parliament”. Even though MPs are given time to focus on constituency work, they are still not using the offices adequately to communicate effectively with the public. During this time, representatives should receive updates from their PCOs, listen to the concerns of residents in the area, and assist them to solve problems. However, the RIPAP established that, due their unstructured nature and the non-prescribed work, PCOs were not functioning well, therefore not effective. The report also found that both MPs and the public did not understand the roles and functions of these offices (RIPAP, 2009:58-60; Waterhouse, 2015:49).

As constituency offices are associated with political parties, certain sectors of societies are finding it difficult to access these offices. There is also a lack of training for staff in these offices and they are therefore not used to disseminate information on, and awareness around, Parliament processes. Funding and accountably towards the funding they receive proves to be a challenge because of inconsistencies among offices and lack of proper controls to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these (Scott, 2009:93; Hicks, 2003:03).

All the respondents identified lack of education or information as one the challenges, as the public is inadequately informed about the role and processes of Parliament. This creates a challenge when Parliament conducts public hearings or committee oversight, as many people tend not to understand what they need to provide inputs on. They end up raising issues that are not relevant to the issue on the table. The 2006 Constitutional Court ruling asserts that Parliament’s duty to facilitate participation includes ensuring that people have the information they need to make their participation meaningful (Ben-Zeev, 2012:21). However, Parliament is still not engaging public in a meaningful way because the IAP2 and Manila Declaration (1989) concerning authentic and empowering public participation are often not taken into consideration. Parliament public participation strategies are at a macro level because they do not take public participation to grassroots level. Taking the Arnstein (1969), Model, Parliament and its macro-level public participation strategies do not often extend beyond a mere “involvement” and “consultation” with the public.

The PEO's role is to run workshops and information sessions prior to the public hearings on the subject matter so that when the committee conducts a public hearing there is a general understanding of the Bill to be discussed. However, this does not happen often and, if it happens, public education practitioners have limited time to educate or share information with the public on the Bill in laymen's terms for the public to understand and make meaningful inputs. Scott (2009:85) reaffirms this notion that "challenges pertaining to public hearings are timeframes and scheduling, language use, content and relevance of discussions, resources, make up of target audience and communication in general". Clearly, Parliament needs to do better to foster understanding of its processes so that the public may engage more effectively with the institution.

There are no policy guidelines or strategies to guide or govern public participation. Each division with an element of public participation in its core function had to come up with Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) to use as a guideline for their public participation projects. In the absence of PPU, there is no clarity of roles between Public Relations, PDOs and PEO about public participation initiatives. This lack of clarity causes confusion. For example, during Taking Parliament to the People public mobilisation is done by PDOs and PEOs, while during public hearings for committees, mobilisation is done by Public Relations. In this way official work in "silos" without proper coordination. This hinders Parliament's efforts to fulfil its mandate of facilitating public participation properly. Once implemented, the aim of the current draft PPM should address these challenges.

Public participation will be successful and effective if the public is empowered to make relevant and meaningful inputs to the committees of Parliament. The inputs should make a difference in the lives of ordinary people through the outcome. Ben-Zeev (2012:23) indicates that according to "the 2006 Constitutional Court ruling, for participation to be meaningful, it must provide people with a reasonable opportunity to influence the outcome of the decision". It will also be effective if it reaches the intended audience. Information should be accessible to the relevant audience and must be easily understandable to the public for them to participate meaningfully in the areas affecting their lives.

There are many challenges currently in the country and the citizens make use of any platform available to raise their concerns, irrespective of the relevance. Lack of education and poor socio-economic conditions are the contributing factors to quantity and not quality outputs. If the public is aware of how democracy works, for example that there are three arms of state (the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary), along with each arm's responsibility they will be empowered to make meaningful, relevant and quality inputs. For instance, instead of complaining about not having houses, water or electricity, they will instruct Parliament to hold the relevant department accountable to provide the necessary services. This will assist the public to make relevant inputs, as in most cases their inputs are wanting as these are mostly of quantity as opposed to quality (Scott, 2009:82). When public participation fails at all level as an alternative they turn to public protests, the frustrated public resort to "invented" spaces for change when the "invited" spaces fail them.

Public inputs should be taken and considered by the committee; however, it is important for the public to note that making an input does not mean that it will be implemented. Ben-Zeev (2012:23) supports this when she asserts, "this does not mean that the public's view must always override other considerations. The legislatures are only required to consider the concerns and values of the public when making decisions". But it seems policy-makers do not really understand the local meaning, giving and holistic contexts at which level of development (service delivery) should take place. They do not necessarily have to do what the public wants. Lisa Draga, Attorney at EELC (in Ben-Zeev, 2012:23) indicates that, "the duty to involve the public in the law-making process does not mean that ultimately the public has final say on what outcome those deliberations take". Sandy Kalyan an MP (in Ben-Zeev, 2012:23) also believes that public views are not really taken into account because "we are so busy with party politicking and point scoring in parliament, we actually forget what we are there to do".

The other issue that became clear from the respondent's responses is the language barrier. The majority of South Africans are illiterate, however Parliament papers are only produced in English and Afrikaans and not in all eleven official languages. The English that is used is also very technical and difficult for an ordinary person who does not have a proper education. As a result of inequality and poverty in our society, illiteracy makes it difficult for ordinary people to find information and understand it.

Ben-Zeev (2012:20) agrees by stating that “many public hearings are conducted in English, and draft laws and other documents are written in English and not always translated into local languages and that many people are not literate, even when they can read, draft laws are written in technical language that is not easy to understand without training”. Isaac Mbadu in Ben-Zeev (2012:23), a community advocate at Social Justice Coalition says, “It’s important that bills are printed in a language that people can actually understand. After that they should have a summary of what the bill actually is saying and what it actually means … so that whether they accept, or whether they do not accept … they actually know what it is”.

7.3.2 Research Question

To what extent does the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environment contexts allow for public participation in Parliament?

Findings

Public access and participation in both NA and NCOP and committee meetings are safeguarded in the South African Constitution (Section 59, 72 and 118 of the Constitution, 1996). The Constitution allows the public to participate actively in politics and to hold their MPs accountable. This makes the political environment conducive for the public to raise different views as parties are also setting the scene for active participation since the change in the political landscape after the 2014 elections. There is “political will” but it is not at the level where it is supposed to be. Technology is regarded as an enabler of public participation in Parliament, and it is therefore significant that the latest technology such as SMTs is utilised and current trends are followed. However, not everyone in South Africa has access to technology, especially in rural areas because of economic conditions. There is still a digital divide between urban and rural areas and those with the means and those without. There is a relationship between technologies and the economic issues because if people do not have the means to buy smartphones, PCs or laptops, or cannot afford airtime they are already cut off from access to information through technology. Because of the physical location of Parliament, not many people have the opportunity to make submissions or presentations to committees, mainly because of socio-economic conditions.

Legally, the environment is conducive because the Constitution (1996) is advocating for Parliament to facilitate public participation in their committee meetings and House sittings. However, lack of access to technology and the socio-economic factors mentioned above supersede that. There are also Standing Rules and Orders in Parliament that govern the petitions process. Different divisions within Parliament, such as committees, PDOs and PCS have their own SOPs for public participation. There are enabling legislations, discussed in chapter 5, which ensure that the public has access to information. The legislative sector also developed the PPF, which aims at providing guidance toall the legislatures including Parliament on the process of adopting public participation. Their role as the leading sector seeks to ultimately assist in legislatures developing their own PPM. Parliament has finalised the PPM, which must still be implemented, that will act as a guideline for public participation in the institution. Apart from these general laws and guidelines, there is no specific public participation policy or strategy in place and this a major challenge which encourages "silo" mentality. Public participation in Parliament is not successful due to poor strategic prioritisation, poor political will and poor coordination.

Analysis

The role of Parliament in facilitating public participation is outlined in the Constitution (1996), thereby encouraging Parliament to include it as one of its strategic objectives or core functions. However, it does not clearly define the parameters of public participation, nor does it provide focused guidelines and direction for developing public participation policy and strategy. Public participation has always been a strategic objective of Parliament since the advent of democracy but it had to take a back seat while oversight and law-making took priority. The political environment is conducive, however there is to some extent a lack of political will. Ben-Zeev (2012:21) cited political differences as the contributor to lack of public participation by stating that there is a view that organisations that are most critical of government are usually not invited to participate in Parliament processes, while those that are less critical are always welcome. Ben-Zeev (2012:21) believes that this handpicking of "the voices that will be heard undermines both the principle and purpose of participation". Vuyiseka Dubula, head of Policy Development and Advocacy Programme for Sonke Gender Justice (in Ben-Zeev, 2012:21), supports this notion by stating "that there is lack of debate and tolerance for people who disagree with power, and that is problematic".

SMTs are regarded as important for public participation but because of huge inequality in socio-economic conditions in South Africa, it might be difficult for the citizens in poorer areas to access this technology. There is still the challenge of a digital divide, with rural and poorer communities the most affected. As Ben-Zeev (2012:27) puts it: “technology can be expensive, but most people today have access to a cell phone, even if it’s not their own. If used with other forms of media – such as radio and television – as well as physical meetings, communication technologies may be able to improve relationships between the public and elected representatives”. This is a fundamental point on public participation strategy which Mchunu and Theron (2014 and 2016) argue, that due to complex grassroots environments, macro-strategies like that at Parliament will be less effective – we need an “appropriate mix” of contexts specific public participation strategies. While emphasising the use of SMTs to communicate it is also important to note that because of historical inequalities there is also the issue of the digital divide where those who cannot afford technology will not have access to information. Unfortunately, not everyone in South Africa owns a smartphone and not everyone is on SMTs mainly because of affordability issues (Frolick, 2015).

The digital divide is a major barrier to e-participation. While the private sector broadband providers will continue to gather the disconnected minority, it should be recognised that the public sector is in the best position to address this problem in regards to both authority and funding. Therefore, the burden of erasing the digital divide falls mostly upon the shoulders of governing entities. It is obviously not something that can be addressed quickly because of the intricacy of the problem and the size of the population that needs help, but addressing this divide should be a continuous agenda for governments at all levels until it ceases to be a significant barrier to e-government (Qina, 2015:37). SMTs can assist to bridge the divide and allow public to participate in Parliament processes especially that government is rolling out free WiFi in many parts of the country.

Parliament is situated in Cape Town, which is far from any other provinces of the country. For citizens to make representations in Parliament they need to make long trips which cost them a lot of money. As a result, not many people come to Parliament to make their voices heard. The legislatures are located in city centres, thereby excluding people in rural areas and people in townships who do not have money to

travel to attend committee meetings (Ben-Zeev, 2012:20). According to Ben-Zeev (2012:20), institutions may provide many opportunities for people to take part in decision-making, but not everyone is able to participate equally. This could be because of one or more of the following: where they live and transport costs, lack of awareness of the opportunity to participate, the language they speak or level of literacy.

Legally, citizens are allowed to participate in the law-making process in Parliament as outlined in the Constitution (1996). Former Chairperson of the NCOP, Mninwa Mahlangu (in Ben-Zeev, 2012:18), reiterates, “Our Constitution strikes a balance between the mandate of public representatives to represent the people in the decision-making process and the need for direct participation of the people in matters concerning their governance”. The Constitution (1996) therefore calls on Parliament and the provincial legislatures to allow the public to attend its meetings but also, importantly, to facilitate participation in deliberation and decision-making (Ben-Zeev, 2012:18).

7.3.3 Research Question

In what ways can SMTs assist to enhance public participation? SMTs have been listed as one of the possible tools for public participation in the proposed Public Participation Model. How effective is this tool?

Findings

In a political context, SMTs are being used to facilitate change in the three major areas of the everyday work of legislators: as electorate representative, party representative, and national legislator. MPs are increasingly likely to communicate their views to constituents collectively and individually via SMTs (Hansard Society, 2009:03). SMTs is key in encouraging public participation; however, it is important to use the appropriate combination of strategies to encourage public participation and it has to be introduced increasingly for it to be effective. Parliament has a footing in digital platforms through four platforms currently operational in Parliament, namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

YouTube is the most popular form of SMT used to receive Parliamentary information, followed by Twitter, with Facebook last. This could be attributed to the fact that through

YouTube the public is able to follow a debate live and raw as it is. With the change in the political landscape due to the 2014 election, Parliament is more “vibrant” than before and there is lot of interesting debates. The Parliament YouTube channel is ranked number 50 in the country, while Twitter is ranked number 125 in the country according to the January-February statistics (Parliament of RSA, 2016).

In its effort to encourage the use of SMTs, Parliament ensures that there is access to a fast, secure, reliable electronic communication network and infrastructure, which will enable high-definition (HD) feed to broadcasters and the Parliament YouTube channel. This enables the public to follow proceedings and participate in Parliament via video streaming, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (Frolick, 2015). Twitter is sufficient for publicising publications, events and current opportunities for the public to get involved. SMTs, such as Facebook, take Parliament closer to the public and can work well to guide people to engagement platforms, learn more about Parliament and, ultimately, participate (Williamson, 2013:19). However, having accounts does not translate into huge followings or public participation but SMTs provides an enabling environment for Parliament to interact with the public (IPU, 2012:21).

SMTs are a serious 21st century phenomena, which is inevitable for any institution that would like to reach and communicate with its citizens. Parliament should therefore leverage this, particularly to attract a younger audience. Respondents agree with this statement as they believe that the content that is communicated through SMTs should be relevant to the audience they are targeting. For example, if SMTs are targeting young people the message should be catchy and interesting to ensure their attention. MPs are gradually being introduced to SMTs, and currently only the chairpersons of portfolio and select committees were assisted to create SMT accounts in an effort to get MPs to use these to interact with the people they represent.

When Facebook and Twitter were first introduced in 2011 and 2013 respectively by the multimedia unit within PCS there were no dedicated resources appointed to manage these two platforms. Different people within PCS were posting whenever possible. It is still not clear which unit within PCS should manage SMTs. YouTube only publishes the House sittings because of a lack of resources as this responsibility was taken up by a multimedia and website team over and above their normal duties.

Analysis

Parliament, like many institutions, heeded the call to incorporate SMTs in their communication platforms by establishing Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram accounts. These platforms are mainly used to promote Parliamentary events and create awareness on Parliamentary proceedings and not necessarily to engage citizens. The respondents answered in unison that Parliament has the right infrastructure and technical resources in place to support the implementation of SMTs as per the ICT strategy. MPs are also provided with the relevant tools of trade that will enable them to execute their duties effectively and efficiently. WEPR (IPU, 2012:70) "Findings from the Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments" in 2009 suggested that most parliaments were doing reasonably well in providing members with much of the basic technology needed, such as PCs and access to the Internet to support their legislative and oversight work and to be able to communicate with citizens".

If there is any level of public participation, it is at the level of information sharing with the public. All the respondents echo the same sentiments that Parliament is currently at the level of "informing" the public according to Arnstein (1969) ladder of participation to create awareness of what is happening in Parliament. For example, the programme of Parliament and the schedule of meetings of committees are uploaded on the website daily; when there is a Bill that is before the committee and public input is needed, the Bill is advertised on, radio, newspapers and posted on SMTs. The radio, newspaper advert and SMTs direct the public to the website and the contact details of the Committee Secretary. In some instances, a hyperlink is attached to the SMT posts for people to click and read the Bill from their smartphones or tablet. All respondents agree that Parliament's participation levels are at the "inform" and "consult" stages, as per Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation and IAP2 spectrum discussed in chapter 2 above. Sound SMTS practice means listening, responding, asking and sharing: it is about being an active participant in the network.

Even though there is growth in terms of following and viewing, SMTs are not as effective as they should be. These currently facilitate one-way distribution of information, mainly to create awareness of what is happening in Parliament, and are not necessarily the interactive tool that SMTs have the potential to be. This is because of a lack of concerted strategy to look at SMTs in totality, timing of Parliament's posts,

red tape or bureaucracy, editorial decisions in terms of what must be published and not published and a lack of monitoring tools. There is also a gap in terms of information flow between the divisions within Parliament where one division receives the inputs through SMTs but they are not filtered down to the division that must analyse, process and respond to the inputs, thus again coordination issues. The website is not interactive; it is used as an “awareness” tool. The tools are also limiting because they are restrictive, specifically in terms of how much information one can post.

This is not surprising, as parliaments have been slow in adopting SMTs. This might be because of the nature of parliamentary institutions, which makes them very poor when it comes to adopting new technology. The technological changes are faster than how things are done in these institutions and therefore often not suitable for parliamentary decision-making. Similarly, SMTs may not be suitable for institutional engagement as it suggests an individual voice that parliament does not have (Leston-Bandeira and Bender, 2013:03).

There is a lack of collaboration between divisions in the institutions, in this case PCS is responsible for sending out content on SMTs while committees and the Houses are responsible for processing and analysing the inputs. However, there is a gap between these two divisions. Parliaments use SMTs to raise public awareness and understanding of the role of Parliament and to increase the participation of citizens in the law-making process. However, only a few parliaments have been able to address these two goals coherently and in a strategic manner by coordinating and leveraging the capabilities available in the different departments of their administrations, or by establishing newly tasked communication and PP units and guidelines for this purpose (IPU, 2012).

SMTs are also not effective because of the limitations of the tools themselves. For instance, because of character lengths inputs cannot be received through, for example, Twitter. It is therefore used to create awareness of what is happening in Parliament and who to contact for more information. The other reason that might be contributing to the low use of SMTs is timing, as Parliament official working times are between 8 am and 5 pm so the posts are normally done around that time and after this there are no resources available to monitor. According to the respondents, the visits to the website drop at night and pick up again in the morning. This clearly shows that

people are more active on the website during the day, probably while at work because the majority have access around that time. SMTs on the other hand are low in the morning after six until after seven pm. This shows that before six, many people are on SMTs before they prepare for work and they are on again after work before they go to bed. Timing is therefore important; people's lifestyles should be taken into consideration before communicating with them.

Red tape is also highlighted as one of the contributors of to the slow use of SMTs. Before content can be sent to the public it has to be approved by different people, thereby losing time and being scooped by other institutions, especially media houses or individual political parties. One respondent argues that this creates gaps in information by allowing privately owned media to interpret Parliament messages because of bureaucracy. A Parliament official can only post the readily approved material on the website and other platforms. They cannot post as events are happening and, unfortunately, with SMTs the news becomes old within seconds. For example, when MPs were removed from the NA chamber the news broke first on media houses' Twitter accounts and the visuals were seen first on the broadcasters YouTube channels.

The main reason though is lack of capacity, as currently there is no one employed to perform SMT responsibilities. When creating the SMT accounts Parliament did not take into consideration the required resources to manage these accounts, no proper planning was done as to how these were to be implemented, and they started on a zero budget. It appears they were created to test how Parliament will fare in the market, but five years later they are still in a test mode as there are no resources dedicated to these platforms. According to WEPR (IPU, 2012:19), the biggest challenges in using SMTS effectively have been the same for many years in terms of budget and human resources, even for parliaments in the high-income group. For a Parliament to take maximum advantage of SMTs, it is essential that skilled resources are allocated to support these tools. Those parliaments most successful in maintaining a SMT presence are those that have invested considerably in this area, often having a team specifically dedicated to the management of these accounts (IPU, 2012:132). Parliament does not have any SMT policy in place except for the ICT policy, which mainly focuses on the technical part of the use of SMTs. In the absence of appropriate policy, the implementation of SMTs becomes difficult because there is

nothing to guide the users. IPU has drafted the broad guidelines for parliaments to follow when implementing the usage of SMTs in their different parliaments, obviously adapting them to suit their needs. The idea of formulating new policies for SMTs utilisation rings true for many countries (Magro, 2012:153).

Currently there is no SMT strategy in place in Parliament to implement the use of SMTs to enhance public participation. By virtue of PCS being the communication hub of Parliament, they are responsible to develop the strategy; however, they need to work hand in hand with other stakeholders. These includes committees; NA and NCOP who are the generators of content and are responsible to process the inputs and submissions by the public; PEO, because they play a critical role in educating the public about Parliament and the content which Parliament would like to interact with the public on; as well as ICT because they provide infrastructure.

7.3.4 Research Question

What is the extent of readiness by Parliament, (both MPs and Staff) to use SMTs as a means of improving current public participation strategies?

Findings

Not all MPs are ready to use SMTs, however the uptake is encouraging given that the new intake of MPs is much younger. Members of some political parties are more active than others. The reasons for a slow take on SMT vary. For example, a majority of the respondents identify a fear of technology and fear of change as one of the reasons. To address this, Parliament recently provided training on how to deal with media and SMTs to the POs, chairpersons of different committees and the House Chairpersons.

The training focused mainly on Chairpersons because they are the official spokespersons of their respective committees. According to the rules, they are the only ones allowed to speak on committee issues. The Speaker of NA and the Chairperson of the NCOP are the spokespersons of Parliament while the Secretary to Parliament speaks on behalf of the administration, who must at all times exercise caution not to be biased when speaking on behalf of Parliament. Leston-Bandeira and Bander (2013:03) echoes these sentiments that “Parliament is constituted by a

collective of many actors and it is not the politician who speaks for parliament, it is the parliamentary official, who needs to be at all points non-biased". WERP (2012:25) agrees that even the presiding officers and the senior staff in the Parliamentary administration must exercise considerable restraint when speaking for Parliament.

Analysis

Based on the findings above, not many of MPs are active on SMTs. While the email usage amongst MPs has become more of routine, the use of newer more emergent and interactive tools such as SMTs are still not being adopted as part of the norm. There are various factors hindering the use of these tools. For example, MPs from political parties that are more liberal are likely to use SMTs more than conservative ones. Interestingly MPs from urban areas are more likely to use SMTs as compared to their counterparts from rural areas. Older MPs are less likely to adopt these tools as compared to those who are much younger. Long-serving MPs are also less likely to use SMTs as opposed to those who are new in Parliament (DDC, 2015:17). This is synonymous with the situation in Parliament where MPs from parties such as the DA and EFF are more active on SMTs than their counterparts in the ANC and IFP mainly because of their age and incumbency.

Parliament prioritised training of chairpersons of committees and House's Chairperson because according to the rules they are the only ones authorised to speak on behalf of the committees they lead. MPs are not allowed to speak on behalf of Parliament or committees because they might be tempted to represent the views of their parties and not those of Parliament. WEPR (IPU, 2012:25) observes that technology enables the voices of parliament to grow in diversity. This is the case because SMTs allows many individuals and groups to connect about the work of parliament. This is a challenge because naturally it is impossible to identify one spokesperson or office to speak on behalf of Parliament because of the nature of the work of the Parliament. Parliament therefore has many voices. (IPU, 2012:25). While MPs are barred from speaking to the media about committee matters, they are allowed to give the views of their parties without compromising the Parliament or the committee.

7.3.5 Summary

Parliament of South Africa has different strategies in place to engage the citizens on parliament processes and decision-making. These include outreach programmes, petitions, programmes such as Taking Parliament to The People and People's Assembly, public hearings as well as committee meetings through presentations from stakeholders such as NGOs, CBOs and other organised formations. Public education office also holds workshops and information sessions with the public. The information gathered from the interviews indicates that these strategies appear to be ineffective. This is confirmed by the literature consulted that Parliament's focus is mainly on "informing", "involving" and "consulting" the public as opposed to empowering the public in a meaningful way to allow them to direct, control and own the decision-making. The findings also indicate that while technology is an abler of public participation in Parliament not everyone has access to technology especially in rural areas because of socio-economic conditions. These conditions supersedes the legal provisions made in the Constitution (1996) for Parliament to facilitate public participation because public would rather prioritise their resources to more important things like food etc. .

In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, Parliament is embracing the use of SMTs to engage with the citizens. This is important because SMTs are generally used as a means of communication among different groups, mainly because of their immediacy and interactive nature. Although Parliament has the required infrastructure to support the use of SMTs, the uptake by the MPs is still slow, however training and tools of trade are provided to address this issue. The findings also indicate that to achieve their objectives Parliament needs to address the issue human and financial resources.

it is important to use the appropriate combination of strategies and it should be introduced increasingly for it to be effective. The appropriate mix will ensure that majority of the citizens participate in the law making process in Parliament. Although SMTs are key in encouraging public participation

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study. It was pertinent to determine the current state of public participation, the use of SMTs and possibility of these tools being used to enhance public participation in order to come up with recommendations. The question to be answered is whether the low level of public participation in the law-making process in Parliament is likely to be enhanced by the use of SMTs if Parliament leverages its current footprint in the digital platforms.

The researcher's goal was to establish whether the use of SMTs could enhance public participation in the law-making process in Parliament. The study seeks to address the following research objectives as stated in Chapter 1:

1. To analyse and describe the context of public participation in the Parliament of South Africa.
2. To examine and analyse the current public participation strategies and their challenges.
3. To conduct literature and comparative analysis of the effective use of SMTs in public participation.
4. To assess the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of public participation in Parliament and the law-making process.
5. To examine the readiness of Parliament in the use of SMTs as a platform for public participation, and legislation and policies that relate to SMTs.
6. To present recommendations on how public participation can be strengthened by the use of SMTs to support decision-making.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The conclusion of the study is that there are a number of challenges that hinder effective public participation, as well as a number of challenges regarding the use of SMTs by Parliament in relation to citizen engagement. For public participation to be

effective and for SMTs to be used to engage the public, these challenges should first be addressed.

8.2.1 Public Participation

The level of public participation is still a challenge in Parliament despite the institution introducing public participation strategies and outreach programmes to engage the citizens as these strategies are still ineffective. This sentiment was shared by the findings of Scott's (2009) study on the effectiveness of public participation in the legislative sector, Waterhouse (2015) study on People's Parliament, an assessment of public participation in South Africa's legislatures and the 2009 report by the Independent Panel on the Assessment of Parliament.

When demonstrating different conceptions of public participation, it is important to differentiate between "involvement" and "empowerment" which according to the literature survey above is a challenge for Parliament as they focusing more on "involvement". Public participation as "involvement" is regarded by Theron and Mchunu (2014:18) as weak participation, which is characterised by co-option, mobilisation, a top-down decision-making process, and an anti-participatory and manipulative mode of participation. The researcher therefore argues that public participation in Parliament is weak which results in citizens being frustrated and disempowered. In an effort to deal with their frustration they often take the protest route. Public participation as "empowerment" is regarded as strong participation and is characterised by a social learning process, capacity-building, and a bottom-up decision-making process (De Beer, 2000:271-272, in Theron & Mchunu, 2014:18). In South Africa, especially in Parliament, mostly the anti-participatory and manipulation modes are employed. This is evident in the draft PPM because the emphasis is placed on "informing" and "consulting" the public, and to a certain extent to "involve" them.

Low levels of education, the location of Parliament and socio-economic conditions that affect access to technology or information are identified as some of the challenges for effective public participation in Parliament. There is still a lack of understanding regarding the role of Parliament, politics and the difference between Parliament and government by the majority of citizens. Without a basic knowledge of Parliament and politics, citizens will have difficulty engaging with them at the most fundamental level (Digital Democracy Commission (DDC), 2015:17). Other challenges include

decentralisation of public participation activities and role clarity, the use of technical language in the proceedings, and lack of monitoring and feedback. In addition, inadequate human and financial resources hinders effective public participation.

8.2.2 Social Media Technologies

ICT through SMTs and mobile technologies give Parliaments more options for communicating with citizens. These new possibilities create an environment in which there are increased opportunities for communication and higher expectations from citizens, even in countries with limited penetration of the Internet. It is therefore the responsibility of parliaments to come up with plans to meet the demands of citizens to communicate through all available channels (Magro, 2012:151).

According to Vesnic-Alujevic (2013:07-08), “the creation of ‘Web 2.0’ offered new opportunities for politicians to communicate on social media technologies”. The political discussions that take place on SMTs are intended to stimulate the better public participation. It is important to approach audiences which consist mostly of youth in a specific way, in order to make them aware of and involve them in the political process”.

Parliament has established a good footprint in the SMT landscape in the country. The question is: are they leveraging the already-established footprint? According to Bertot et al. (2012:30-34), “for government use of SMTs to increase access to government information and services and to successfully facilitate civic participation, members of the public must be able to access and use social media technologies”. Williamson (in IPU, 2012:35-36) agrees that SMTs has the ability to create a huge possibility for citizens to engage with parliaments in dialogue, which was not previously the case, and to build credibility and trust over a long period.

The two main challenges from which the rest follow are lack of policy guidelines for the use of SMTs and lack of strategy for the implementation of SMTs in relation to public participation. The researcher found that while Parliament is active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, there are no policy guidelines on the use of SMTs and the strategy for its implementation. In the absence of policy and strategy it is difficult to determine the resources (human and financial) needed for successful implementation of SMTs. The footprint that Parliament has established in the SMT landscape, is not guided by any policy and this can lead to misuse. In the absence of

strategy and policy, SMTs are by default currently only used for information sharing and awareness campaigns. The interactive potential of SMTs has not been fully explored to get the public to participate in the law-making process. According to Magro (2012:151) governments need new policies and more resources to avoid misuse and unforeseen loss of control and authenticity in their messages particularly because they use SMTs mostly for participation and engagement in their projects.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3.1 Resourcing SMTs

SMTs can be used to track and monitor public debate around issues affecting Parliament. Content and educational material on legislation or the work of Parliament can be published and promoted by using relevant links on SMTs (IPU, 2012:35-36). When adopting SMTs, Parliament must consider the following. Firstly, ensure that there is a dedicated resource to communicate on behalf of the institution. Secondly ensure that legal issues, such as privacy and freedom of speech, policy etc., are considered. Thirdly, there should be a crisis strategy should anything go wrong and, lastly, the right SMT platform must be chosen (IPU, 2012:35-36).

South Africa is vast, with people staying in the far-flung areas and are deeply divided in many ways – there are disparities across socio-economic and education levels, urban and rural areas – which makes effective public participation impossible. There is, however, hope, as technology seems to be making this vastness easier to cover be it via radio, television, internet, cell phones or SMTs. Of these, SMTs seem to be surpassing the other platforms in terms of its flexibility, ability to allow many to many interaction, immediacy and the potential to mobilize.

Based on the analysis, there is a need for greater coordination between the divisions in Parliament responsible for both the areas of public participation (Committee Section, NA and NCOP) and SMTs (PCS and ICT) if Parliament is to succeed in using appropriate technology to engage with the public. This should be addressed by both public participation and SMT strategies. Public participation activities should be centralised in one office, in this case the public participation unit. This office should

coordinate all public participation programmes from the core function branch and then interact with PCS and ICT offices from the support branch in relation to the ICT tools and platforms relevant for public participation. Dunleavy and Margetts (2010, in Magro, 2012:153) state, “E-government in the digital era needs to focus on simplification and collaboration rather than dis-integration. It should produce client-focused services that are efficient, and move to embrace electronic delivery of everything”. The roles and responsibilities of PDOs and PCOs should be clearly differentiated to avoid duplication and to ensure that maximum benefit is derived from these strategies in enhancing public participation (RIPAP, 2009:62-63).

It has been noted in the findings that other groupings of society are often excluded from political activities. These groups include women, youth, people from lower socio-economic groups and those who have not received / benefitted from formal education. In Africa, where the digital divide is severe, e-government was seen to exacerbate the separation, resulting in social exclusion to the disadvantaged, and in the U.S., as of 2009, 25 percent of households were still without Internet access (Magro, 2012:151). The use of technology should therefore not perpetuate this situation where those who are already engaged have more say. Parliament should ensure that it targets those excluded groups with the use of SMTs to avoid simply giving more voice to the already politically engaged and techno-savvy. However, a significant proportion of the population of each country is online, and is either actively or passively participating in public policy, social and political issues. This is clearly a new world of opinion and potentially behaviour formation that needs to be understood and monitored by decision-makers and influencers (College & Martyn, 2012:12).

8.3.2. The Tailor-made strategies and Advocacy

There has to be a strategy in place to reach out to groups that are less likely to engage to avoid amplifying only the voice of the privileged. The strategy should include the way in which the barriers to participation, such as the digital divide, can be addressed. One respondent indicated that Parliament should present information in a more dynamic way, especially when communicating with the youth as they must use the language that the youth understand rather than sounding “as dull as a ditchwater” if it wants to engage with new audiences (DDC, 2015:29). For example, in the survey done by DDC (2015:28) in the UK parliament, “many people, especially younger people,

asked for more video and social media, pointing out that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are where people spend a lot of time".

It is important that young people are politically educated on politics and the role of government while they are still in school to improve their understanding of good governance and democracy. The subject should include simple issues, such as how laws are made and how Parliament works so that they understand how different functionaries operate when they are ready to vote. There is an attempt by the Department of Education (DoE) to include active citizenship in the Life Orientation curriculum. However, a study by Arendse (2014:56) indicates "63 percent of the learners agreed that the curriculum does not teach learners enough about active citizenship". Respondents indicated Parliament developed a curriculum a few years ago to be included in the school syllabus but it was never implemented. The curriculum should be revisited and updated and then implemented. Parliament should form partnerships with stakeholders like the DoE to find ways to include political education in the curriculum in a meaningful way. Digital platforms should be explored in the provision of political education to young people in schools to make it interesting to them.

It is important to note that people who normally would not want to participate in Parliament activities, are likely to participate if they convinced that their issues will be considered and their participation will make a difference. To create citizen interest in parliamentary proceedings, Parliament should prioritise the debates and committee meetings that are of public interest on their digital platforms. For example, meetings of Portfolio Committees to address Eskom challenges, SAA problems and problems at SABC held on 31 August, 09 September and 05 October 2016 respectively should have been given enough coverage on all platforms as they were dealing with issues of particular importance and interest to the public. DDC (2015:26) agrees that, "people's interest in politics tends to be linked to current affairs and issues that are of particular importance to them".

Most people are not aware of the workshops and sessions that Parliament regularly conducts to increase public understanding of the institution through its outreach and education work. It is recommended that more work be done to raise public awareness on the role of Parliament, the role of MPs, and ways in which the public can participate

in Parliament processes. This is happening to a certain extent, for example, with recent public hearings conducted by Portfolio Committee on Cooperate Government and Traditional Affairs, public is educated on the bill to be discussed in these hearings. The challenge is that the public participation practitioners are only deployed a week before the hearings and not 60 days prior as stipulated in the draft PPM. Running these workshops as dictated by the law would assist and demonstrate to citizens how Parliament and politics can be relevant in their lives (DDC, (2015:17). To achieve this Parliament should set itself a target for when it will reach what percentage of the public to be educated about the institution. They should map out a strategy on how this target will be reached and this should be accompanied by a communication strategy, which should outline which platforms will be used with the aim of increasing public awareness about the role of Parliament and MPs.

8.3.3. Co-ordination, Monitoring and Feedback

In order to ensure the success of these events it is critical that effective follow up visits are made to participating communities to give them feedback on how their inputs have been addressed and to monitor progress of the Executive on commitments based on these inputs as dictated by IAP2 and Manila Declaration (1989) in chapter 2. One of the core values by IAP2 (2002) indicates that “the public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision”. Furthermore, it is essential that the inputs received during these events are incorporated into Parliamentary processes, for example by debating an event, report or assigning specific issues to committees for further consideration.

The language used in Parliament can be intimidating to ordinary citizens, and it is worse in South Africa with its high rate of illiteracy and inequality. Parliament should reduce the use of jargon and introduce simple language to make it easier for people to understand and engage with its activities and processes. For example, an ordinary person would not understand what a “back bencher”, snap debate, or a point of order means. This can be achieved by developing digital tools, such as jargon busters, to help readers understand Parliamentary language and processes, including the law-making process; and also by clarifying and simplifying online and printed communications.

The wider use of aids for people with disabilities and sensory impairments, such as sign language translations and subtitles for video material to help deaf people to participate in Parliament, should be adopted even in the committee meetings. Currently Parliament only provides interpretation including sign language in the debates in the NA and NCOP. All the proceedings should be made available in all official languages. RIPAP (2009:64) asserts that “relatively simple interventions, such as carefully explaining the legislation under consideration in a public hearing, with care taken to use plain language and enumerate the main perspectives and controversial issues, can go a long way in assisting individuals and organisations to make effective, meaningful contributions”.

Once implemented, the PPM of Parliament is likely to address most of the challenges related to effective and meaningful public participation concerning role clarity, centralisation of public participation support, proper coordination and collaboration of different divisions within Parliament, feedback and monitoring tools and to a certain extent human and financial resources. The PPM indicates the need for an audit of the resources currently available to support public participation in order to eliminate inefficiencies and maximise economic and effective utilisation of resources. It also recommends the creation of a line item dedicated to public participation, thereby centralising the budget. Based on the above it is important for Parliament to implement the model as a matter of urgency so that all these challenges can be addressed. What is not clear is how SMTs are likely to be implemented, or rather how Parliament is likely to leverage on the already established footprint in the digital world. It is only mentioned as one of the possible tools. The researcher is of the opinion that this should be given more priority because of its ability to mobilise.

There must be a monitoring mechanism to track Parliament’s profile and presence online through Google alerts and RSS feeds, and through SMT analytics over twenty-four hours seven days a week. They should also view and review sittings of Parliament and committee meetings on YouTube and share with stakeholders.

8.3.4. Policy on Acceptable SMT use

Parliament should develop a policy that will guide the use of SMTs in Parliament to avoid unnecessary misinterpretations and misuse. The policy should give guidance for the use of SMTs by both administration staff and MPs. Parliament can use the

framework of eight elements proposed by Hardinova, et al. (2010, in Magro, 2012:153) that must be followed when developing a policy or guidelines. The proposed elements that must be addressed for a successful SMTs policy are employee access, account management, acceptable use, employee conduct, content, security, legal issues, and citizen conduct. In 2013 the IPU also developed a guideline for parliaments when implementing SMTs in the institution. The guidelines present a detailed procedure that must be followed when adopting the use of SMTs. SMTs should also accommodate different languages when required, and where two or more official languages are used parliaments need to consider how SMT content can be made available in each one (Williamson, 2013:20).

Red tape is listed as one of the challenges hindering the effective use of SMTs in Parliament. Magro (2015:153) argues, “Social media supports the increased reliance on human networks, the need for rapid interactive communications, the need to blur what is private and public, and the need for engaging multimedia. Whether government can use social media will depend upon how well government can see, understand, and attend to these needs”. Given that SMTs are fast interactive communication tools, bureaucratic institutions such as parliaments might find it difficult to adjust to the increased pressure for timely responses. In simple terms this means that parliaments should look into relaxing their bureaucratic nature when it comes to the use of SMTs otherwise it will not be able to take advantage of the immediacy and interactive potential of this tool, which might hinder the achievement of its intended goal of increasing public participation through the use of the tools.

The Internet has had a demonstrable impact on Parliamentary communication. Most MPs are now communicating online, many have websites, some blogs, and a few maintain a presence on SMTs (Hansard Society, 2009:06). Parliament should take advantage of the well-established accounts of political parties by requesting the party leaders follow Parliament and post Parliamentary debates to their accounts so that their followers can in turn follow Parliament. For example, Party Leaders like Hon. Malema and Hon. Maimane are very active on SMTs and have a huge following. If they are requested to follow Parliament, their followers will in turn also follow Parliament, thereby expanding Parliament’s following. Parties should be forwarded Parliament YouTube and website links so that they can also carry Parliamentary debates on their websites and YouTube channels. According to Williamson (2013:14),

“A broad range of members commenting on a debate through social media can widen the perspective that the public gets about parliamentary procedure or the topic under discussion.”

As the demand for video increases, the introduction of a new wave of opposition parties, such as the EFF, DA and Cope, the broadcast footage of debates and committee meetings has become increasingly valuable, but access to the footage of speeches in Parliament for MPs, broadcasters and the public is inadequate. It is difficult to find these online and it can take days rather than minutes to make clips of speeches available for MPs to put on their websites partly because Parliament is still using an analogue system as opposed to digital systems. For example, if the MPs are looking for their speeches they need to request it, pay for it and only then it can be copied on a DVD. This can take days and sometimes weeks. Parliament should make it easy for MPs to access their speeches online immediately after the debates and embed the footage on their websites. Members of the public should also be able to use audio-visual clips from Parliament in a similar way.

Parliament has just upgraded the broadcast infrastructure that should address the issue of easy and immediate access of Parliamentary proceedings. This will ensure that high-quality audio-visual footage of more committee meetings is available as a live feed on YouTube or on demand after the debate or meeting. However, this cannot happen in a vacuum, as without a proper strategy in place the infrastructure will not make any difference. To ensure that Parliament facilitates public participation as mandated by the Constitution (1996) and to exploit this technical advance, video footage should be freely available for use by the public and by media organisations without a charge and without unreasonable copyright restrictions, so that people can see the work that their representatives do on their behalf. At present, the public is expected to pay a nominal fee to get a copy of the debates from Parliament and the process to get the footage is tedious. However, there are no copyright restrictions except for when the footage is developed further to produce a documentary or film. It is also important that video footage is fully searchable, which means integrating Hansard Society reports of debates and other information with the audio-visual content. The implementation of Media Asset Management (MAM) should address this requirement.

8.3.5. Capacity Development for SMTs to enhance Public Participation

Parliaments that are successful in sustaining SMTs presence are those that have invested extensively in skilled resources specifically dedicated to managing SMT accounts. Parliament should employ enough SMT skilled personnel to manage the existing accounts and to investigate other platforms that Parliament can invest in to reach more citizens. This team should put together a SMTs strategy that is informed by public participation strategy, communication strategy and the overall strategy of Parliament. The strategy will inform the kind of budget, tools and other resources that might be needed to successfully implement it. It should come up with a different way of implementing SMTs and not follow what the corporate sector is doing by haphazardly implementing SMTs for the sake of using it. Parliament SMT use should be planned, fair, promote engagement and transparency (Dadashzadeh, 2010, in Magro, 2012:153).

Currently, the quality of footage on Parliamentary Channel 408 is below the required standard and the way the meetings and the debates are covered lacks professionalism required in the industry. If Parliament wants to increase interest and following on the YouTube Channel and viewership on the Parliamentary Channel, they need to increase the quality of their output, offer training for camera operators for quality coverage and improve the look and feel of the channels. Parliament should use different platforms to promote each other, for example on the Parliamentary channel there should be comments from SMTs during the live debates or meetings. In that case, people will be encouraged to participate when they see their comments live on TV.

As Williamson put it in DDC (2015:26), “The public are not disengaged. They are disengaged from party politics; they are disengaged from adversarial politics; they are disengaged from wasting their time; they do not feel that they make any difference—but they are not disengaged.” Making Parliament more accessible to the public through online platforms might encourage more people to engage. It is important to note that people who are currently not participating in political issues are unlikely to start participating just because they can do it online. There should be something to trigger the interest; Parliament need to make them believe that it is worth their while, so opportunities to engage must be genuine.

It is important for Parliament to go where the people are “not in physical form” by engaging them and connecting with them in digital spaces where they spend most of their time. According to Kemp (2016:05), “an average South African spends just under five hours a day online”. Interestingly, the time spent on SMTs and watching TV is almost exactly the same amount, at 2 hours 43 minutes and 2 hours 21 minutes respectively. This could be because people participate on SMTs such as Tweeting, Whatsapping or Facebooking while they are watching television, i.e. using second screen in digital terms.

The benefit of SMT is that it is able to provide up-to-the minute information about issues people care about in a bite-sized and informal way (DDC, 2015:28). Parliament has been experimenting in this area with live Tweeting of Parliamentary proceedings to update the public of what is happening in a particular debate. This is a good initiative that must be strengthened. The live Tweeting should be real-time, such as when updating the public about the speakers at the podium, the current debate and their views on the topic. It is important, though, that there is a balance, especially in a multiparty system to avoid bias. This should be addressed by the policy guidelines.

SMTs also allow people to respond to meetings and events in their own words. It is important to ensure that the interactive advantage of SMTs is explored by ensuring that the real-time information about Parliament is not one-way. The public should be allowed to have their digital devices in the chamber and Tweet and blog live during Parliamentary proceedings, once having been briefed beforehand to maintain the decorum of the Houses. DDC (2015:28) agrees that, “this might also help people to understand what is going on by enabling them to look up relevant documents, procedural rules and jargon using their digital devices while watching the debates”. It is therefore important that restrictions be relaxed relating to the use of mobile devices by the public inside the chamber.

The Parliamentary website is a primary source of information about Parliament for members of the public. It should be easy for people to find the information they want about Parliament, whether this is basic information about visiting Parliament or detailed information about specific issues. Those who visit the Parliamentary website will expect the search function to help them find what they are looking for, but this has been flagged as a key weakness. In order to be effective it will also be necessary that

the information available on the website be constantly updated. The Parliamentary website has a key role to play in raising awareness about Parliament and MPs, but the way information is presented needs to be more accessible. The website should conform to the way the public is used to being able to access information. For example Parliament can use multimedia platforms such as short videos or infographics as people are used to receiving information in these ways. Parliament's website should be used to share information about Parliament's work, profiling principles, and on focused communications campaigns such as TPTTP.

The researcher believes that it is critical to measure the impact and the following of SMTs regularly to ensure that there is diversity in the group communicating with Parliament. These include strengthening the ratio of broadcasting to participation and the likelihood of Retweets; shared reach, that is, how far is the content spread across the social network; a number of new or lost followers at a time; and identifying what is being said and whether this is positive or negative. Sound SMT practice means listening, responding, asking and sharing, as they are faster and fast changing (IPU, 2012:35-36). Though SMTs can play an important role in parliaments, its intentional potential will continually be constrained, as there is a need always to protect the reputation of parliaments when utilising SMTs (Duffey & Foley, 2011:199).

Conventional "wisdom" states that if you can mobilise a core group of people in a target audience to "advocate" for a particular belief, product or issue, then you are more likely to be successful in gaining the level of cohesiveness required to change public opinion or behaviour. This is more relevant today than at any time in the past because the evolving online world has the penetration and reach to make mobilisation, expression of opinion, sharing of experiences, activism, and ultimately advocacy much easier than at any other time in history. This opens up a completely new world for public discourse, information, debate and behavioural impact. For example, it can take as little as 10% of a population to change what the other 90% think and therefore do/behave (Colledge & Martyn, 2012:03). This principle is critical to understanding the impact of social media on issues and public policy.

Importantly, Parliament should note that South Africa is ranked high on the list of countries with the most engaged users (either "active" or "passive") in public policy, social and political issues. The institution should therefore leverage on this as such

strategies may be particularly appealing to many citizens who want to engage in political decisions of particular concern to them without spending an inordinate amount of time in the process (Duffey & Foley, 2011:201; Colledge & Martyn, 2012:04). Digital platforms have the potential to widen public participation on a large scale but people are more likely to participate when they are asked to do so in person. It is suggested there should be other spaces, such as democracy cafés, which are public spaces where people could go to talk about politics in a safe space and be assisted in joining online debates in an effort to encourage them to participate. Theron and Mchunu 2014 and 2016) point that SMT is more effective when applied in an appropriate mix with other strategies. The researcher argue macro-level public participation strategies cannot be seen as a blueprint, it all depends on the local or required context for public participation engagement.

Digital tools present significant opportunities for wider public engagement. However, these opportunities will succeed only if Parliament and MPs are prepared to listen to people's views and take them on board. Parliaments are still very new to SMTs and, whilst it is still unclear what influences these tools can have on public engagement, legislatures are increasingly expected to have a SMT presence and to think out of the box. This requires a new style of communication and additional resources. Duffey and Foley (2011:200) agree that, even if SMTs are successful in engaging time-poor citizens in the political process, it is not clear whether this will strengthen representation. While an emerging body of research demonstrates the positive impact of SMTs on citizens' political engagement, more research is needed to establish whether the new media genuinely deepens or widens political engagement or merely amplifies those voices that are already prominent in the parliamentary system.

By their very nature, actively engaged users represent potential advocates or detractors for a particular interest, in need of either mobilisation or neutralisation. Utilising SMTs for public participation requires a voice. A more effective way of finding that voice may be through facilitating access to a multiplicity of more specific SMT accounts (IPU, 2012:31-33).

8.3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion the use of SMTs for public participation will be cost effective as it allows a reduction in saving from documents, transport etc. It will also address the issue of time poor citizens by reaching the public without the need to be in a single place at a single time. Its potential for many to many interactions and two-way communication, ability to mobilise, immediacy, flexibility makes it attractive as an effective tool for Parliament to consider in honouring their Constitutional mandate to facilitate public participation in its processes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TWITTER SAMPLE

The phrase #BringBackTheSignal was, for some time, the top trending phrase around the globe. The vast majority of traffic on Twitter was supportive of the appeal.


Seiphi @KeSeiphi

Haha "@PhutiTuba: #BRINGBACKTHESIGNAL BEFORE#BRINGBACKTHEMONEY ')"

7:19 PM - 12 Feb 2015


Carmel Rickard @CarmelRickard

Viva @judithfebruary viva! Thank you for your authentic voice of reason and constitutional sanity! #bringbackthesignal


DeviSankareeGovender @Devi_HQ

#BRINGBACKTHESIGNAL #SONA2015 Is the signal back? Baleka carrying on. Tell me somebody, just tell me please.

7:18 PM - 12 Feb 2015 · Johannesburg, South Africa, South Africa

While many of the Tweets were serious, others saw the lighter side of the situation.


Barry Bateman

@barrybateman

Mbete says the issue of the scrambling has been "unscrambled".#BringBackTheSignal

12 Feb 15

Source: Stuart Thomas, Burn Media. http://memeburn.com/2015/02/sa-parliament-social-media-erupts-as-cellphone-signal-jammed/

APPENDIX 2: LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa
Tel: 27 (21) 403 2364/2786 Fax: 27 (21) 403 2371
www.parliament.gov.za

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr G Mgidlana
Secretary to Parliament

FROM: R Pollah
Acting Divisional Manager: ICT

DATE: 14 December 2015

SUBJECT: **Request for permission for Ms Sefora to conduct research within Parliament in fulfillment of her Master's Degree**

Dear Mr Mgidlana

1. APPROVAL REQUIRED

Request for permission for Ms Sefora to conduct research on the following topic: The use of Social Media as a platform for Public Participation in the national Parliament of South Africa: *Creating participatory spaces through social media – the Parliament of South Africa*

2. BACKGROUND

Ms Sefora is currently studying towards Master's degree in Public Administration with Stellenbosch University through Parliament bursary system. She is at the final stages of completing her thesis where she needs to collect data.

The research is on the potential of Social Media as a strategy to enhance Public Participation in Parliament. She is therefore required to conduct interviews with key administrative staff involved in the project of developing the Public Participation Model for Parliament. It necessary also to conduct interviews with Members of Parliament involved in this project. The key objective of this research is to determine whether Parliament is ready to make use of social media to enhance public participation.

3. MOTIVATION

The research is done in fulfillment of Master's Degree. Parliament is selected as an institution for this research because of convenience and the interest on the subject matter and how it is applied in parliament. The research once published will assist Parliament with regards to the use of Social Media in relation to Public Participation. It will add to the literature on the subject matter which is currently not enough. Ms Sefora is aware of the contents of the Research Agreement between herself, Parliament and Stellenbosch University and promised to abide by the stipulated conditions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IF ANY)

None

5. STAFF IMPLICATIONS (IF ANY)

6. RECOMMENDATION

The Secretary to Parliament is requested to approve the following:

Permission for Ms Sefora to conduct research within parliament based on the agreement signed between her, representative from Stellenbosch University (her Supervisor) and the Secretary to Parliament.

Mr R Pollah
Acting Divisional Manager: ICT
Date: 15/12/2015

Mr M Mokonyane
Acting HR Executive
Date: 15/12/2015

Ms B Tyawa
Deputy Secretary to Parliament
Date: 17/12/2015

APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED

Acting STP
ADV NE PHINDELA

Gengidiana
Secretary to Parliament

11.01.16
Date

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Research title: Public Participation in Parliament– Perspectives on Social Media Technology (SMT)

Name of researcher: Margaret: M Sefora
Production Specialist: Information and Communication Technology
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
Telephone: +27 21 403 2027
Mobile +27 832982476
e-mail: mmsefora@parliament.gov.za, mmsefora@gmail.com

Information:

The aim of this research will be to explore how SMTs can enhance public participation in the law-making process in Parliament. Interviews will be conducted with key officials responsible and involved in development of the Public Participation Model and information and communication technology (ICT). The study will look at the current public participation strategies in Parliament and their impact and the extent to which SMTs are used in Parliament. The question that one needs to answer is as follows: Is Parliament leveraging enough on the already established SMT landscape?

Your involvement and contribution towards this very is very important. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. The interview will not take up more than 30 minutes of your time. Please also note that your involvement in this study is voluntary and, as such, you may at any point choose to withdraw. The results of this research will be made available to the institution upon completion.

My supervisor for this research is Mr Francois Theron, at the School of Public Leadership / Public and Development Management (PDM), University of Stellenbosch, South Africa who may be contacted at: +27(0)21 808 2195 (secretary) or +27(0)21 873 0170 (office), Cell; 084 511 4158, or via e-mail: ft1@.sun.ac.za.

If you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, please indicate your consent by signing this form.

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

APPENDIX 4: FORMAT FOR DATA COLLECTION

Instructions to the Researcher:

These guidelines have been formulated to give structure, guidance and consistency to the process of collecting data and as such should be strictly adhered to as documented.

Italicized text within brackets is intended for the interviewer only and should not be read out aloud during the interview.

Preamble

(Greeting) My Name is Mado Sefora I am conducting a Masters research on the use of social media technologies (SMTs) as a strategy to enhance public participation in Parliament. I would like to observe and record the status of public participation strategies in Parliament, their impact and how SMTs can be used to enhance current public participation efforts.

Consent

I have obtained permission from the Secretary to Parliament to conduct the research within the institution. Consequent to that I am requesting you to participate in this study by signing a consent form indicating that you have no objection to be interviewed.

(*hand over the form to the respondent to sign if they agree to participate in the research. If they are not comfortable with signing, thank them and proceed to another participant*).

Before we continue, do you have any questions which I could answer about my study?

(*Pause for a response from the participant. Answer any questions if there are any at this point; if none proceed with the interview.*)

Allow me to briefly explain the procedure to you. Firstly, I am going to ask you a number of questions on several aspects related to this research. Please give me

detailed answers as opposed to just answering with a just a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’. If you cannot respond to a question please do not worry, if possible refer me to someone else who will be in a position to answer those particular questions instead. Please note that any additional information (documents or books) that may help me understand the issues better is welcome.

With your permission, I would like to record the interview for me to capture your responses accurately and to write down some notes to help me remember key points. Would you mind me recording our discussion?

(*Allow the participant time to respond. If they agree with the recoding, continue. If the participant has some doubts with the interview being recorded, give them an assurance that the recording will be confidential as guided by the ethics of research and will only be used for verification of the data collection and analysis process. If the participant is still not comfortable, do not insist; agree and proceed only with taking notes.*)

The interview

I am now going to begin with some questions. (*For participants who have agreed to be recorded*) May I start with the recording? (*Switch on the recording device and ensure that the recording is underway before continuing*).

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for a Masters Research thesis supervised by Mr F Theron, Senior Lecturer, School of Public Leadership (SPL)/Public and Development Management (PDM), University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

RESEARCH AREA: Public participation and the use of SMTs

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: To investigate the use of SMTs as the strategy to enhance public participation in Parliament

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Questions

Public participation:

1. How does Parliament engage the public in its processes of law- and decision-making?
2. How is the public in general involved in Parliament processes and issues?
3. What is the criteria for successful public participation?
4. To what extent does the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environment contexts allow for public participation in Parliament?
5. What are the legislative, regulatory and policy strategies in place to promote public participation in Parliament?
6. What are the challenges, if any?

Social media:

7. In what ways can ICT assist in encouraging public participation?
8. SMTs have been listed as one of the possible tools for public participation in the proposed Public Participation Model. How effective is this tool?
9. Does parliament have a social media technologies (SMTs) strategy in place?
10. If so, what are the timeframes for the implementation of the strategy?
11. Who is responsible for the implementation and management of the plan?
12. To what extent is Parliament (both MPs and staff) ready to use SMTs as a means of improving current public participation strategies?

13. According to the International Association for Participation (IAP2), there are five levels of engagement: to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. At what level would you say SMTs are being used to communicate with the public in Parliament?
14. How does Parliament compare in terms of the use of SMTs to enhance public participation within the international and regional context of good governance?
15. What are the challenges faced by parliament in using SMTs to interact with the people, if there are any?
16. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are the three main forms of SMTs used in parliament. Of the three, which one is the most popular form of between Parliament and the public or interest groups?

Procedures, resources, technology:

17. What resources does Parliament have to support the use of SMTs?
18. What strategies are in place to assist technologically challenged users?
19. Is there a standard process in place to guide the users?
20. Is there adequate number of staff and relevant skills to support the use of SMTs as one of the public participation strategies?
21. Do staff and MPs have the necessary tools available to effectively use SMTs? If yes, what are the tools?
22. Are there any programmes or incentives designed to encourage the use of SMTs by internal users to facilitate communication by Parliament?
23. Does Parliament have in place the required technology/infrastructure to support the implementation of SMTs?
24. Theorist J.A. Schumpeter identifies three stages of technological innovation, with reference to these stages, listed below:
    - First stage – people first use technology to replace old forms;
    - Second stage – once people have replaced old forms, they use technology to improve the way they work; and
    - Third stage – it is only at this stage that the full potential of the technology is revealed when people completely transform the way they behave.

    At what stage would you locate Parliament's efforts in using SMTs in their effort to enhance public participation?
25. Lastly do you have anything else to contribute?

APPENDIX 6: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BEST FIT APPROACH

Figure 2.5: Best Fit Approach: Parliament's Model of Public Participation